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BY

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE, M.A.

REGIUS PROFESSOR OF MODERN HISTORY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

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THE SCIENCE OF HISTORY:

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION,

FEBRUARY 5, 1864.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I have undertaken to speak to you this evening on what is called the Science of History. I fear it is a dry subject; and there seems, indeed, something incongruous in the very connection of such words as Science and History. It is as if we were to talk of the colour of sound, or the longitude of the rule-of-three. Where it is so difficult to make out the truth on the commonest disputed fact in matters passing under our very eyes, how can we talk of a science in things long past, which come to us only through books? It often seems to me as if History was like a child's box of letters, with which we can spell any word we please. We have only to pick out such letters as we want, arrange them as we like, and say nothing about those which do not suit our purpose.

I will try to make the thing intelligible, and I will

try not to weary you; but I am doubtful of my success either way. First, however, I wish to say a word or two about the eminent person whose name is connected with this way of looking at History, and whose premature death struck us all with such a sudden sorrow. Many of you, perhaps, recollect Mr Buckle as he stood not so long ago in this place. He spoke for more than an hour without a note—never repeating himself, never wasting words; laying out his matter as easily and as pleasantly as if he had been talking to us at his own fireside. We might think what we pleased of Mr Buckle's views, but it was plain enough that he was a man of uncommon power; and he had qualities also—qualities to which he, perhaps, himself attached little value, as rare as they were admirable.

Most of us, when we have hit on something which we are pleased to think important and original, feel as if we should burst with it. We come out into the book-market with our wares in hand, and ask for thanks and recognition. Mr Buckle, at an early age, conceived the thought which made him famous, but he took the measure of his abilities. He knew that whenever he pleased he could command personal distinction, but he cared more for his subject than for himself. He was contented to work with patient reticence, unknown and unheard of, for twenty years; and then, at middle life, he produced a work which was translated at once into French and German, and, of all places in the world, fluttered the dovecotes of the Imperial Academy at St Petersburg.

Goethe says somewhere, that as soon as a man has done anything remarkable, there seems to be a general conspiracy to prevent him from doing it again. He is feasted, fêted, caressed: his time is stolen from him by breakfasts, dinners, societies, idle businesses of a thousand kinds. Mr Buckle had his share of all this; but there are also more dangerous enemies that wait upon success like his. He had scarcely won for himself the place which he deserved, than his health was found shattered by his labours. He had but time to show us how large a man he was—time just to sketch the outlines of his philosophy, and he passed away as suddenly as he appeared. He went abroad to recover strength for his work, but his work was done with and over. He died of a fever at Damascus, vexed only that he was compelled to leave it uncompleted. Almost his last conscious words were, 'My book, my book! I shall never finish my book!' He went away as he had lived, nobly careless of himself, and thinking only of the thing which he had undertaken to do.

But his labour had not been thrown away. Disagree with him as we might, the effect which he had already produced was unmistakable, and it is not likely to pass away. What he said was not essentially new. Some such interpretation of human things is as early as the beginning of thought. But Mr Buckle, on the one hand, had the art which belongs to men of genius; he could present his opinions with peculiar distinctness; and, on the other hand, there is much in the mode of speculation at present current among us for which

those opinions have an unusual fascination. They do not please us, but they excite and irritate us. We are angry with them; and we betray, in being so, an uneasy misgiving that there may be more truth in those opinions than we like to allow.

Mr Buckle's general theory was something of this kind: When human creatures began first to look about them in the world they lived in, there seemed to be no order in anything. Days and nights were not the same length. The air was sometimes hot and sometimes cold. Some of the stars rose and set like the sun; some were almost motionless in the sky; some described circles round a central star above the north horizon. The planets went on principles of their own; and in the elements there seemed nothing but caprice. Sun and moon would at times go out in eclipse. Sometimes the earth itself would shake under men's feet; and they could only suppose that earth and air and sky and water were inhabited and managed by creatures as wayward as themselves.

Time went on, and the disorder began to arrange itself. Certain influences seemed beneficent to men, others malignant and destructive, and the world was supposed to be animated by good spirits and evil spirits, who were continually fighting against each other, in outward nature and in human creatures themselves. Finally, as men observed more and imagined less, these interpretations gave way also. Phenomena the most opposite in effect were seen to be the result of the same natural law. The fire did not burn the house down if

the owners of it were careful, but remained on the hearth and boiled the pot; nor did it seem more inclined to burn a bad man's house down than a good man's, provided the badness did not take the form of negligence. The phenomena of nature were found for the most part to proceed in an orderly, regular way, and their variations to be such as could be counted upon. From observing the order of things, the step was easy to cause and effect. An eclipse, instead of being a sign of the anger of Heaven, was found to be the necessary and innocent result of the relative position of sun, moon, and earth. The comets became bodies in space, unrelated to the beings who had imagined that all creation was watching them and their doings. By degrees, caprice, volition, all symptoms of arbitrary action, disappeared out of the universe; and almost every phenomenon in earth or heaven was found attributable to some law, either understood or perceived to exist. Thus nature was reclaimed from the imagination. The first fantastic conception of things gave way before the moral; the moral in turn gave way before the natural; and at last there was left but one small tract of jungle where the theory of law had failed to penetrate—the doings and characters of human creatures themselves.

There, and only there, amidst the conflicts of reason and emotion, conscience and desire, spiritual forces were still conceived to exist. Cause and effect were not traceable when there was a free volition to disturb the connection. In all other things, from a given set

of conditions, the consequences necessarily followed. With man, the word law changed its meaning; and instead of a fixed order, which he could not choose but follow, it became a moral precept, which he might disobey if he dared.

This it was which Mr Buckle disbelieved. The economy which prevailed throughout nature, he thought it very unlikely should admit of this exception. He considered that human beings acted necessarily from the impulse of outward circumstances upon their mental and bodily condition at any given moment. Every man, he said, acted from a motive; and his conduct was determined by the motive which affected him most powerfully. Every man naturally desires what he supposes to be good for him; but to do well, he must know well. He will eat poison, so long as he does not know that it is poison. Let him see that it will kill him, and he will not touch it. The question is not of moral right and wrong. Once let him be thoroughly made to feel that the thing is destructive, and he will leave it alone by the law of his nature. His virtues are the result of knowledge; his faults, the necessary consequence of the want of it. A boy desires to draw. He knows nothing about it; he draws men like trees or houses, with their centre of gravity anywhere. He makes mistakes, because he knows no better. We do not blame him. Till he is better taught he cannot help it. But his instruction begins. He arrives at straight lines; then at solids; then at curves. He learns perspective, and light and shade. He observes

more accurately the forms which he wishes to represent. He perceives effects, and he perceives the means by which they are produced. He has learned what to do; and, in part, he has learned how to do it; his after-progress will depend on the amount of force which his nature possesses. But all this is as natural as the growth of an acorn. You do not preach to the acorn that it is its duty to become a large tree; you do not preach to the art-pupil that it is his duty to become a Holbein. You plant your acorn in favourable soil, where it can have light and air, and be sheltered from the wind; you remove the superfluous branches, you train the strength into the leading shoots. The acorn will then become as fine a tree as it has vital force to become. The difference between men and other things is only in the largeness and variety of man's capacities; and in this special capacity, that he alone has the power of observing the circumstances favourable to his own growth, and can apply them for himself. Yet, again, with this condition,—that he is not, as is commonly supposed, free to choose whether he will make use of these appliances or not. When he knows what is good for him, he will choose it; and he will judge what is good for him by the circumstances which have made him what he is.

And what he would do, Mr Buckle supposed that he always had done. His history had been a natural growth as much as the growth of the acorn. His improvement had followed the progress of his knowledge; and, by a comparison of his outward circumstances with

the condition of his mind, his whole proceedings on this planet, his creeds and constitutions, his good deeds and his bad, his arts and his sciences, his empires and his revolutions, would be found all to arrange themselves into clear relations of cause and effect.

If, when Mr Buckle pressed his conclusions, we objected the difficulty of finding what the truth about past times really was, he would admit it candidly as far as concerned individuals; but there was not the same difficulty, he said, with masses of men. We might disagree about the characters of Julius or Tiberius Cæsar, but we could know well enough the Romans of the Empire. We had their literature to tell us how they thought; we had their laws to tell us how they governed; we had the broad face of the world, the huge mountainous outline of their general doings upon it, to tell us how they acted. He believed it was all reducible to laws, and could be made as intelligible as the growth of the chalk cliffs or the coal measures.

And thus consistently Mr Buckle cared little for individuals. He did not believe (as some one has said) that the history of mankind is the history of its great men. Great men with him were but larger atoms, obeying the same impulses with the rest, only perhaps a trifle more erratic. With them or without them, the course of things would have been much the same.

As an illustration of the truth of his view, he would point to the new science of Political Economy. Here already was a large area of human activity in which natural laws were found to act unerringly. Men had

gone on for centuries trying to regulate trade on moral principles. They had endeavoured to fix wages according to some imaginary rule of fairness; to fix prices by what they considered things ought to cost. They encouraged one trade or discouraged another, for moral reasons. They might as well have tried to work a steam engine on moral reasons. The great statesmen whose names were connected with these enterprises might have as well legislated that water should run uphill. There were natural laws fixed in the conditions of things: and to contend against them was the old battle of the Titans against the gods.

As it was with political economy, so it was with all other forms of human activity; and as the true laws of political economy explained the troubles which people fell into in old times, because they were ignorant of them, so the true laws of human nature, as soon as we knew them, would explain their mistakes in more serious matters, and enable us to manage better for the future. Geographical position, climate, air, soil, and the like, had their several influences. The northern nations are hardy and industrious, because they must till the earth if they would eat the fruits of it, and because the temperature is too low to make an idle life enjoyable. In the south, the soil is more productive, while less food is wanted and fewer clothes; and in the exquisite air, exertion is not needed to make the sense of existence delightful. Therefore, in the south we find men lazy and indolent.

True, there are difficulties in these views; the home

of the languid Italian was the home also of the sternest race of whom the story of mankind retains a record. And again, when we are told that the Spaniards are superstitious, because Spain is a country of earthquakes, we remember Japan, the spot in all the world where earthquakes are most frequent, and where at the same time there is the most serene disbelief in any supernatural agency whatsoever.

Moreover, if men grow into what they are by natural laws, they cannot help being what they are, and if they cannot help being what they are, a good deal will have to be altered in our general view of human obligations and responsibilities.

That, however, in these theories there is a great deal of truth is quite certain; were there but a hope that those who maintain them would be contented with this admission. A man born in a Mahometan country grows up a Mahometan; in a Catholic country, a Catholic; in a Protestant country, a Protestant. His opinions are like his language; he learns to think as he learns to speak; and it is absurd to suppose him responsible for being what nature makes him. We take pains to educate children. There is a good education and a bad education; there are rules well ascertained by which characters are influenced, and, clearly enough, it is no mere matter for a boy's free will whether he turns out well or ill. We try to train him into good habits; we keep him out of the way of temptations; we see that he is well taught; we mix kindness and strictness; we surround him with every

good influence we can command. These are what are termed the advantages of a good education: and if we fail to provide those under our care with it, and if they go wrong in consequence, the responsibility we feel to be as much ours as theirs. This is at once an admission of the power over us of outward circumstances.

In the same way, we allow for the strength of temptations, and the like.

In general, it is perfectly obvious that men do necessarily absorb, out of the influences in which they grow up, something which gives a complexion to their whole after-character.

When historians have to relate great social or speculative changes, the overthrow of a monarchy or the establishment of a creed, they do but half their duty if they merely relate the events. In an account, for instance, of the rise of Mahometanism, it is not enough to describe the character of the Prophet, the ends which he set before him, the means which he made use of, and the effect which he produced; the historian must show what there was in the condition of the Eastern races which enabled Mahomet to act upon them so powerfully; their existing beliefs, their existing moral and political condition.

In our estimate of the past, and in our calculations of the future—in the judgments which we pass upon one another, we measure responsibility, not by the thing done, but by the opportunities which people have had of knowing better or worse. In the efforts which we make to keep our children from bad associations or

friends we admit that external circumstances have a powerful effect in making men what they are.

But are circumstances everything? That is the whole question. A science of history, if it is more than a misleading name, implies that the relation between cause and effect holds in human things as completely as in all others, that the origin of human actions is not to be looked for in mysterious properties of the mind, but in influences which are palpable and ponderable.

When natural causes are liable to be set aside and neutralized by what is called volition, the word Science is out of place. If it is free to a man to choose what he will do or not do, there is no adequate science of him. If there is a science of him, there is no free choice, and the praise or blame with which we regard one another are impertinent and out of place.

I am trespassing upon these ethical grounds because, unless I do, the subject cannot be made intelligible. Mankind are but an aggregate of individuals —History is but the record of individual action; and what is true of the part, is true of the whole.

We feel keenly about such things, and when the logic becomes perplexing, we are apt to grow rhetorical and passionate. But rhetoric is only misleading. Whatever the truth may be, it is best that we should know it; and for truth of any kind we should keep our heads and hearts as cool as we can.

I will say at once, that if we had the whole case before us—if we were taken, like Leibnitz's Tarquin, into the council-chamber of nature, and were shown

what we really were, where we came from, and where we were going, however unpleasant it might be for some of us to find ourselves, like Tarquin, made into villains, from the subtle necessities of 'the best of all possible worlds;' nevertheless, some such theory as Mr Buckle's might possibly turn out to be true. Likely enough, there is some great 'equation of the universe' where the value of the unknown quantities can be determined. But we must treat things in relation to our own powers and position; and the question is, whether the sweep of those vast curves can be measured by the intellect of creatures of a day like ourselves.

The 'Faust' of Goethe, tired of the barren round of earthly knowledge, calls magic to his aid. He desires, first, to see the spirit of the Macrocosmos, but his heart fails him before he ventures that tremendous experiment, and he summons before him, instead, the spirit of his own race. There he feels himself at home. The stream of life and the storm of action, the everlasting ocean of existence, the web and the woof, and the roaring loom of time—he gazes upon them all, and in passionate exultation claims fellowship with the awful thing before him. But the majestic vision fades, and a voice comes to him—'Thou art fellow with the spirits which thy mind can grasp—not with me.'

Had Mr Buckle tried to follow his principles into detail, it might have fared no better with him than with 'Faust.'

What are the conditions of a science? and when may any subject be said to enter the scientific stage?

I suppose when the facts of it begin to resolve themselves into groups; when phenomena are no longer isolated experiences, but appear in connection and order; when, after certain antecedents, certain consequences are uniformly seen to follow; when facts enough have been collected to furnish a basis for conjectural explanation, and when conjectures have so far ceased to be utterly vague, that it is possible in some degree to foresee the future by the help of them.

Till a subject has advanced as far as this, to speak of a science of it is an abuse of language. It is not enough to say that there must be a science of human things, because there is a science of all other things. This is like saying the planets must be inhabited, because the only planet of which we have any experience is inhabited. It may or may not be true, but it is not a practical question; it does not affect the practical treatment of the matter in hand.

Let us look at the history of Astronomy.

So long as sun, moon, and planets were supposed to be gods or angels; so long as the sword of Orion was not a metaphor, but a fact, and the groups of stars which inlaid the floor of heaven were the glittering trophies of the loves and wars of the Pantheon, so long there was no science of Astronomy. There was fancy, imagination, poetry, perhaps reverence, but no science. As soon, however, as it was observed that the stars retained their relative places—that the times of their rising and setting varied with the seasons—that sun, moon, and planets moved among them in a plane, and

the belt of the Zodiac was marked out and divided, then a new order of things began. Traces of the earlier stage remained in the names of the signs and constellations, just as the Scandinavian mythology survives now in the names of the days of the week: but for all that, the understanding was now at work on the thing; Science had begun, and the first triumph of it was the power of foretelling the future. Eclipses were perceived to recur in cycles of nineteen years, and philosophers were able to say when an eclipse was to be looked for. The periods of the planets were determined. Theories were invented to account for their eccentricities; and, false as those theories might be, the position of the planets could be calculated with moderate certainty by them. The very first result of the science, in its most imperfect stage, was a power of foresight; and this was possible before any one true astronomical law had been discovered.

We should not therefore question the possibility of a science of history, because the explanations of its phenomena were rudimentary or imperfect: that they might be, and might long continue to be, and yet enough might be done to show that there was such a thing, and that it was not entirely without use. But how was it that in those rude days, with small knowledge of mathematics, and with no better instruments than flat walls and dial plates, the first astronomers made progress so considerable? Because, I suppose, the phenomena which they were observing recurred, for the most part, within moderate intervals; so that they

could collect large experience within the compass of their natural lives: because days and months and years were measurable periods, and within them the more simple phenomena perpetually repeated themselves.

But how would it have been if, instead of turning on its axis once in twenty-four hours, the earth had taken a year about it; if the year had been nearly four-hundred years; if man's life had been no longer than it is, and for the initial steps of astronomy there had been nothing to depend upon except observations recorded in history? How many ages would have passed, had this been our condition, before it would have occurred to any one, that, in what they saw night after night, there was any kind of order at all?

We can see to some extent how it would have been, by the present state of those parts of the science which in fact depend on remote recorded observations. The movements of the comets are still extremely uncertain. The times of their return can be calculated only with the greatest vagueness.

And yet such a hypothesis as I have suggested would but inadequately express the position in which we are in fact placed towards history. There the phenomena never repeat themselves. There we are dependent wholly on the record of things said to have happened once, but which never happen or can happen a second time. There no experiment is possible; we can watch for no recurring fact to test the worth of our conjectures. It has been suggested, fancifully, that if we consider the universe to be infinite, time is the same as eternity,

and the past is perpetually present. Light takes nine years to come to us from Sirius; those rays which we may see to-night when we leave this place, left Sirius nine years ago; and could the inhabitants of Sirius see the earth at this moment, they would see the English army in the trenches before Sebastopol; Florence Nightingale watching at Scutari over the wounded at Inkermann; and the peace of England undisturbed by 'Essays and Reviews.'

As the stars recede into distance, so time recedes with them, and there may be, and probably are, stars from which Noah might be seen stepping into the ark, Eve listening to the temptation of the serpent, or that older race, eating the oysters and leaving the shell-heaps behind them, when the Baltic was an open sea.

Could we but compare notes, something might be done; but of this there is no present hope, and without it there will be no science of history. Eclipses, recorded in ancient books, can be verified by calculation, and lost dates can be recovered by them, and we can foresee by the laws which they follow when there will be eclipses again. Will a time ever be when the lost secret of the foundation of Rome can be recovered by historic laws? If not, where is our science? It may be said that this is a particular fact, that we can deal satisfactorily with general phenomena affecting eras and cycles. Well, then, let us take some general phenomenon. Mahometanism, for instance, or Buddhism. Those are large enough. Can you imagine a science which

would have[1] *foretold* such movements as those? The state of things out of which they rose is obscure; but suppose it not obscure, can you conceive that, with any amount of historical insight into the old Oriental beliefs, you could have seen that they were about to transform themselves into those particular forms and no other?

It is not enough to say, that, after the fact, you can understand partially how Mahometanism came to be. All historians worth the name have told us something about that. But when we talk of science, we mean something with more ambitious pretences, we mean something which can foresee as well as explain; and, thus looked at, to state the problem is to show its absurdity. As little could the wisest man have foreseen this mighty revolution, as thirty years ago such a thing as Mormonism could have been anticipated in America; as little as it could have been foreseen that table-turning and spirit-rapping would have been an outcome of the scientific culture of England in the nineteenth century.

The greatest of Roman thinkers gazing mournfully at the seething mass of moral putrefaction round him, detected and deigned to notice among its elements a certain detestable superstition, so he called it, rising up amidst the offscouring of the Jews, which was named Christianity. Could Tacitus have looked forward nine

[1] It is objected that Geology is a science: yet that Geology cannot foretell the future changes of the earth's surface. Geology is not a century old, and its periods are measured by millions of years. Yet, if Geology cannot foretell future facts, it enabled Sir Roderick Murchison to foretell the discovery of Australian gold.

centuries to the Rome of Gregory VII., could he have beheld the representative of the majesty of the Cæsars holding the stirrup of the Pontiff of that vile and execrated sect, the spectacle would scarcely have appeared to him the fulfilment of a rational expectation, or an intelligible result of the causes in operation round him. Tacitus, indeed, was born before the science of history; but would M. Comte have seen any more clearly?

Nor is the case much better if we are less hard upon our philosophy; if we content ourselves with the past, and require only a scientific explanation of that.

First, for the facts themselves. They come to us through the minds of those who recorded them, neither machines nor angels, but fallible creatures, with human passions and prejudices. Tacitus and Thucydides were perhaps the ablest men who ever gave themselves to writing history; the ablest and also the most incapable of conscious falsehood. Yet even now, after all these centuries, the truth of what they relate is called in question. Good reasons can be given to show that neither of them can be confidently trusted. If we doubt with these, whom are we to believe?

Or again, let the facts be granted. To revert to my simile of the box of letters, you have but to select such facts as suit you, you have but to leave alone those which do not suit you, and let your theory of history be what it will, you can find no difficulty in providing facts to prove it.

You may have your Hegel's philosophy of history,

or you may have your Schlegel's philosophy of history; you may prove from history that the world is governed in detail by a special Providence; you may prove that there is no sign of any moral agent in the universe, except man; you may believe, if you like it, in the old theory of the wisdom of antiquity; you may speak, as was the fashion in the fifteenth century, of 'our fathers, who had more wit and wisdom than we;' or you may talk of 'our barbarian ancestors,' and describe their wars as the scuffling of kites and crows.

You may maintain that the evolution of humanity has been an unbroken progress towards perfection; you may maintain that there has been no progress at all, and that man remains the same poor creature that he ever was; or, lastly, you may say with the author of the 'Contrat Social,' that men were purest and best in primeval simplicity—

When wild in woods the noble savage ran.

In all, or any of these views, history will stand your friend. History, in its passive irony, will make no objection. Like Jarno, in Goethe's novel, it will not condescend to argue with you, and will provide you with abundant illustrations of anything which you may wish to believe.

'What is history,' said Napoleon, 'but a fiction agreed upon?' 'My friend,' said Faust to the student, who was growing enthusiastic about the spirit of past ages; 'my friend, the times which are gone are a book with seven seals; and what you call the spirit of past

ages is but the spirit of this or that worthy gentleman in whose mind those ages are reflected.'

One lesson, and only one, history may be said to repeat with distinctness; that the world is built somehow on moral foundations; that, in the long run, it is well with the good; in the long run, it is ill with the wicked. But this is no science; it is no more than the old doctrine taught long ago by the Hebrew prophets. The theories of M. Comte and his disciples advance us, after all, not a step beyond the trodden and familiar ground. If men are not entirely animals, they are at least half animals, and are subject in this aspect of them to the conditions of animals. So far as those parts of man's doings are concerned, which neither have, nor need have, anything moral about them, so far the laws of him are calculable. There are laws for his digestion, and laws of the means by which his digestive organs are supplied with matter. But pass beyond them, and where are we? In a world where it would be as easy to calculate men's actions by laws like those of positive philosophy as to measure the orbit of Neptune with a foot-rule, or weigh Sirius in a grocer's scale.

And it is not difficult to see why this should be. The first principle on which the theory of a science of history can be plausibly argued, is that all actions whatsoever arise from self-interest. It may be enlightened self-interest; it may be unenlightened; but it is assumed as an axiom, that every man, in whatever he does, is aiming at something which he considers will promote his happiness. His conduct is not determined

by his will; it is determined by the object of his desire. Adam Smith, in laying the foundations of political economy, expressly eliminates every other motive. He does not say that men never act on other motives; still less, that they never ought to act on other motives. He asserts merely that, as far as the arts of production are concerned, and of buying and selling, the action of self-interest may be counted upon as uniform. What Adam Smith says of political economy, Mr Buckle would extend over the whole circle of human activity.

Now, that which especially distinguishes a high order of man from a low order of man—that which constitutes human goodness, human greatness, human nobleness—is surely not the degree of enlightenment with which men pursue their own advantage; but it is self-forgetfulness—it is self-sacrifice—it is the disregard of personal pleasure, personal indulgence, personal advantages remote or present, because some other line of conduct is more right.

We are sometimes told that this is but another way of expressing the same thing; that when a man prefers doing what is right, it is only because to do right gives him a higher satisfaction. It appears to me, on the contrary, to be a difference in the very heart and nature of things. The martyr goes to the stake, the patriot to the scaffold, not with a view to any future reward to themselves, but because it is a glory to fling away their lives for truth and freedom. And so through all phases of existence, to the smallest details of common life, the beautiful character is the unselfish charac-

ter. Those whom we most love and admire are those to whom the thought of self seems never to occur; who do simply and with no ulterior aim—with no thought whether it will be pleasant to themselves or unpleasant —that which is good, and right, and generous.

Is this still selfishness, only more enlightened? I do not think so. The essence of true nobility is neglect of self. Let the thought of self pass in, and the beauty of a great action is gone—like the bloom from a soiled flower. Surely it is a paradox to speak of the self-interest of a martyr who dies for a cause, the triumph of which he will never enjoy; and the greatest of that great company in all ages would have done what they did, had their personal prospects closed with the grave. Nay, there have been those so zealous for some glorious principle, as to wish themselves blotted out of the book of Heaven if the cause of Heaven could succeed.

And out of this mysterious quality, whatever it be, arise the higher relations of human life, the higher modes of human obligation. Kant, the philosopher, used to say that there were two things which overwhelmed him with awe as he thought of them. One was the star-sown deep of space, without limit and without end; the other was, right and wrong. Right, the sacrifice of self to good; wrong, the sacrifice of good to self;—not graduated objects of desire, to which we are determined by the degrees of our knowledge, but wide asunder as pole and pole, as light and darkness—one, the object of infinite love; the other, the object of infinite detestation and scorn. It is in this

marvellous power in men to do wrong (it is an old story, but none the less true for that)—it is in this power to do wrong—wrong or right, as it lies somehow with ourselves to choose—that the impossibility stands of forming scientific calculations of what men will do before the fact, or scientific explanations of what they have done after the fact. If men were consistently selfish, you might analyze their motives; if they were consistently noble, they would express in their conduct the laws of the highest perfection. But so long as two natures are mixed together, and the strange creature which results from the combination is now under one influence and now under another, so long you will make nothing of him except from the old-fashioned moral—or, if you please, imaginative—point of view.

Even the laws of political economy itself cease to guide us when they touch moral government. So long as labour is a chattel to be bought and sold, so long, like other commodities, it follows the condition of supply and demand. But if, for his misfortune, an employer considers that he stands in human relations towards his workmen; if he believes, rightly or wrongly, that he is responsible for them; that in return for their labour he is bound to see that their children are decently taught, and they and their families decently fed, and clothed, and lodged; that he ought to care for them in sickness and in old age; then political economy will no longer direct him, and the relations between himself and his dependents will have to be arranged on other principles.

So long as he considers only his own material profit, so long supply and demand will settle every difficulty: but the introduction of a new factor spoils the equation.

And it is precisely in this debatable ground of low motives and noble emotions—in the struggle, ever failing, yet ever renewed, to carry truth and justice into the administration of human society; in the establishment of states and in the overthrow of tyrannies; in the rise and fall of creeds; in the world of ideas; in the character and deeds of the great actors in the drama of life; where good and evil fight out their everlasting battle, now ranged in opposite camps, now and more often in the heart, both of them, of each living man—that the true human interest of history resides. The progress of industries, the growth of material and mechanical civilization, are interesting, but they are not the most interesting. They have their reward in the increase of material comforts; but, unless we are mistaken about our nature, they do not highly concern us after all.

Once more; not only is there in men this baffling duality of principle, but there is something else in us which still more defies scientific analysis.

Mr Buckle would deliver himself from the eccentricities of this and that individual by a doctrine of averages. Though he cannot tell whether A, B, or C will cut his throat, he may assure himself that one man in every fifty thousand, or thereabout (I forget the exact proportion), will cut his throat, and with this he consoles himself. No doubt it is a comforting dis-

covery. Unfortunately, the average of one generation need not be the average of the next. We may be converted by the Japanese, for all that we know, and the Japanese methods of taking leave of life may become fashionable among us. Nay, did not Novalis suggest that the whole race of men would at last become so disgusted with their impotence, that they would extinguish themselves by a simultaneous act of suicide, and make room for a better order of beings? Anyhow, the fountain out of which the race is flowing perpetually changes—no two generations are alike. Whether there is a change in the organization itself, we cannot tell; but this is certain, that as the planet varies with the physical atmosphere which surrounds it, so each new generation varies from the last, because it inhales as its spiritual atmosphere the accumulated experience and knowledge of the whole past of the world. These things form the intellectual air which we breathe as we grow; and in the infinite multiplicity of elements of which that air is now composed, it is for ever matter of conjecture what the minds will be like which expand under its influence.

From the England of Fielding and Richardson to the England of Miss Austen—from the England of Miss Austen to the England of Railways and Free-trade, how vast the change; yet perhaps Sir Charles Grandison would not seem so strange to us now, as one of ourselves will seem to our great-grandchildren. The world moves faster and faster; and the difference will probably be considerably greater.

The temper of each new generation is a continual surprise. The fates delight to contradict our most confident expectations. Gibbon believed that the era of conquerors was at an end. Had he lived out the full life of man, he would have seen Europe at the feet of Napoleon. But a few years ago we believed the world had grown too civilized for war, and the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park was to be the inauguration of a new era. Battles, bloody as Napoleon's, are now the familiar tale of every day; and the arts which have made greatest progress are the arts of destruction. What next? We may strain our eyes into the future which lies beyond this waning century; but never was conjecture more at fault. It is blank darkness, which even the imagination fails to people.

What then is the use of History? and what are its lessons? If it can tell us little of the past, and nothing of the future, why waste our time over so barren a study?

First, it is a voice for ever sounding across the centuries the laws of right and wrong. Opinions alter, manners change, creeds rise and fall, but the moral law is written on the tablets of eternity. For every false word or unrighteous deed, for cruelty and oppression, for lust or vanity, the price has to be paid at last: not always by the chief offenders, but paid by some one. Justice and truth alone endure and live. Injustice and falsehood may be long-lived, but doomsday comes at last to them, in French revolutions and other terrible ways.

That is one lesson of History. Another is, that we should draw no horoscopes; that we should expect little, for what we expect will not come to pass. Revolutions, reformations — those vast movements into which heroes and saints have flung themselves, in the belief that they were the dawn of the millennium— have not borne the fruit which they looked for. Millenniums are still far away. These great convulsions leave the world changed—perhaps improved,—but not improved as the actors in them hoped it would be. Luther would have gone to work with less heart, could he have foreseen the Thirty Years' War, and in the distance the theology of Tubingen. Washington might have hesitated to draw the sword against England, could he have seen the country which he made as we see it now.[1]

The most reasonable anticipations fail us—antecedents the most opposite mislead us; because the conditions of human problems never repeat themselves. Some new feature alters everything — some element which we detect only in its after-operation.

But this, it may be said, is but a meagre outcome. Can the long records of humanity, with all its joys and sorrows, its sufferings and its conquests, teach us no more than this? Let us approach the subject from another side.

If you were asked to point out the special features in which Shakespeare's plays are so transcendently

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[1] February, 1864.

excellent, you would mention, perhaps, among others, this, that his stories are not put together, and his characters are not conceived, to illustrate any particular law or principle. They teach many lessons, but not any one prominent above another; and when we have drawn from them all the direct instruction which they contain, there remains still something unresolved—something which the artist gives, and which the philosopher cannot give.

It is in this characteristic that we are accustomed to say Shakespeare's supreme *truth* lies. He represents real life. His dramas teach as life teaches—neither less nor more. He builds his fabrics as nature does, on right and wrong; but he does not struggle to make nature more systematic than she is. In the subtle interflow of good and evil—in the unmerited sufferings of innocence—in the disproportion of penalties to desert—in the seeming blindness with which justice, in attempting to assert itself, overwhelms innocent and guilty in a common ruin—Shakespeare is true to real experience. The mystery of life he leaves as he finds it; and, in his most tremendous positions, he is addressing rather the intellectual emotions than the understanding,—knowing well that the understanding in such things is at fault, and the sage as ignorant as the child.

Only the highest order of genius can represent nature thus. An inferior artist produces either something entirely immoral, where good and evil are names, and nobility of disposition is supposed to show itself in

the absolute disregard of them—or else, if he is a better kind of man, he will force on nature a didactic purpose; he composes what are called moral tales, which may edify the conscience, but only mislead the intellect.

The finest work of this kind produced in modern times is Lessing's play of 'Nathan the Wise.' The object of it is to teach religious toleration. The doctrine is admirable—the mode in which it is enforced is interesting; but it has the fatal fault, that it is not true. Nature does not teach religious toleration by any such direct method; and the result is—no one knew it better than Lessing himself—that the play is not poetry, but only splendid manufacture. Shakespeare is eternal; Lessing's 'Nathan' will pass away with the mode of thought which gave it birth. One is based on fact; the other, on human theory about fact The theory seems at first sight to contain the most immediate instruction; but it is not really so.

Cibber and others, as you know, wanted to alter Shakespeare. The French king, in 'Lear,' was to be got rid of; Cordelia was to marry Edgar, and Lear himself was to be rewarded for his sufferings by a golden old age. They could not bear that Hamlet should suffer for the sins of Claudius. The wicked king was to die, and the wicked mother; and Hamlet and Ophelia were to make a match of it, and live happily ever after. A common novelist would have arranged it thus; and you would have had your comfortable moral that wickedness was fitly punished, and virtue had its due reward, and all would have been

well. But Shakespeare would not have it so. Shakespeare knew that crime was not so simple in its consequences, or Providence so paternal. He was contented to take the truth from life; and the effect upon the mind of the most correct theory of what life ought to be, compared to the effect of the life itself, is infinitesimal in comparison.

Again, let us compare the popular historical treatment of remarkable incidents with Shakespeare's treatment of them. Look at 'Macbeth.' You may derive abundant instruction from it — instruction of many kinds. There is a moral lesson of profound interest in the steps by which a noble nature glides to perdition. In more modern fashion you may speculate, if you like, on the political conditions represented there, and the temptation presented in absolute monarchies to unscrupulous ambition; you may say, like Dr Slop, these things could not have happened under a constitutional government; or, again, you may take up your parable against superstition—you may dilate on the frightful consequences of a belief in witches, and reflect on the superior advantages of an age of schools and newspapers. If the bare facts of the story had come down to us from a chronicler, and an ordinary writer of the nineteenth century had undertaken to relate them, his account, we may depend upon it, would have been put together upon one or other of these principles. Yet, by the side of that unfolding of the secrets of the prison-house of the soul, what lean and shrivelled anatomies the best of such descriptions would seem!

Shakespeare himself, I suppose, could not have given us a theory of what he meant—he gave us the thing itself, on which we might make whatever theories we pleased.

Or again, look at Homer.

The 'Iliad' is from two to three thousand years older than 'Macbeth,' and yet it is as fresh as if it had been written yesterday. We have there no lessons save in the emotions which rise in us as we read. Homer had no philosophy; he never struggles to impress upon us his views about this or that; you can scarcely tell indeed whether his sympathies are Greek or Trojan; but he represents to us faithfully the men and women among whom he lived. He sang the Tale of Troy, he touched his lyre, he drained the golden beaker in the halls of men like those on whom he was conferring immortality. And thus, although no Agamemnon, king of men, ever led a Grecian fleet to Ilium; though no Priam sought the midnight tent of Achilles; though Ulysses and Diomed and Nestor were but names, and Helen but a dream, yet, through Homer's power of representing men and women, those old Greeks will still stand out from amidst the darkness of the ancient world with a sharpness of outline which belongs to no period of history except the most recent. For the mere hard purposes of history, the 'Iliad' and 'Odyssey' are the most effective books which ever were written. We see the Hall of Menelaus, we see the garden of Alcinous, we see Nausicaa among her maidens on the shore, we see the mellow monarch sitting with

ivory sceptre in the Market-place dealing out genial justice. Or again, when the wild mood is on, we can hear the crash of the spears, the rattle of the armour as the heroes fall, and the plunging of the horses among the slain. Could we enter the palace of an old Ionian lord, we know what we should see there; we know the words in which he would address us. We could meet Hector as a friend. If we could choose a companion to spend an evening with over a fireside, it would be the man of many counsels, the husband of Penelope.

I am not going into the vexed question whether History or Poetry is the more true. It has been sometimes said that Poetry is the more true, because it can make things more like what our moral sense would prefer they should be. We hear of poetic justice and the like, as if nature and fact were not just enough.

I entirely dissent from that view. So far as poetry attempts to improve on truth in that way, so far it abandons truth, and is false to itself. Even literal facts, exactly as they were, a great poet will prefer whenever he can get them. Shakespeare in the historical plays is studious, wherever possible, to give the very words which he finds to have been used; and it shows how wisely he was guided in this, that those magnificent speeches of Wolsey are taken exactly, with no more change than the metre makes necessary, from Cavendish's Life. Marlborough read Shakespeare for English history, and read nothing else. The poet only is not bound, when it is inconvenient, to what may be called the accidents of facts. It was enough for Shakespeare

to know that Prince Hal in his youth had lived among loose companions, and the tavern in Eastcheap came in to fill out his picture; although Mrs Quickly and Falstaff, and Poins and Bardolph, were more likely to have been fallen in with by Shakespeare himself at the Mermaid, than to have been comrades of the true Prince Henry. It was enough for Shakespeare to draw real men, and the situation, whatever it might be, would sit easy on them. In this sense only it is that Poetry is truer than History, that it can make a picture more complete. It may take liberties with time and space, and give the action distinctness by throwing it into more manageable compass.

But it may not alter the real conditions of things, or represent life as other than it is. The greatness of the poet depends on his being true to nature, without insisting that nature should theorize with him, without making her more just, more philosophical, more moral than reality; and, in difficult matters, leaving much to reflection which cannot be explained.

And if this be true of Poetry—if Homer and Shakespeare are what they are, from the absence of everything didactic about them—may we not thus learn something of what History should be, and in what sense it should aspire to teach?

If Poetry must not theorize, much less should the historian theorize, whose obligations to be true to fact are even greater than the poet's. If the drama is grandest when the action is least explicable by laws, because then it best resembles life, then history will be

grandest also under the same conditions. 'Macbeth,' were it literally true, would be perfect history; and so far as the historian can approach to that kind of model, so far as he can let his story tell itself in the deeds and words of those who act it out, so far is he most successful. His work is no longer the vapour of his own brain, which a breath will scatter; it is the thing itself, which will have interest for all time. A thousand theories may be formed about it—spiritual theories, Pantheistic theories, cause and effect theories; but each age will have its own philosophy of history, and all these in turn will fail and die. Hegel falls out of date, Schlegel falls out of date, and Comte in good time will fall out of date; the thought about the thing must change as we change; but the thing itself can never change; and a history is durable or perishable as it contains more or least of the writer's own speculations. The splendid intellect of Gibbon for the most part kept him true to the right course in this; yet the philosophical chapters for which he has been most admired or censured may hereafter be thought the least interesting in his work. The time has been when they would not have been comprehended: the time may come when they will seem commonplace.

It may be said, that in requiring history to be written like a drama, we require an impossibility.

For history to be written with the complete form of a drama, doubtless is impossible; but there are periods, and these the periods, for the most part, of greatest interest to mankind, the history of which may be so written that

the actors shall reveal their characters in their own words; where mind can be seen matched against mind, and the great passions of the epoch not simply be described as existing, but be exhibited at their white heat in the souls and hearts possessed by them. There are all the elements of drama—drama of the highest order—where the huge forces of the times are as the Grecian destiny, and the power of the man is seen either stemming the stream till it overwhelms him, or ruling while he seems to yield to it.

It is Nature's drama—not Shakespeare's—but a drama none the less.

So at least it seems to me. Wherever possible, let us not be told *about* this man or that. Let us hear the man himself speak, let us see him act, and let us be left to form our own opinions about him. The historian, we are told, must not leave his readers to themselves. He must not only lay the facts before them—he must tell them what he himself thinks about those facts. In my opinion, this is precisely what he ought not to do. Bishop Butler says somewhere, that the best book which could be written would be a book consisting only of premises, from which the readers should draw conclusions for themselves. The highest poetry is the very thing which Butler requires, and the highest history ought to be. We should no more ask for a theory of this or that period of history, than we should ask for a theory of 'Macbeth' or 'Hamlet.' Philosophies of history, sciences of history—all these, there will continue to be; the fashions of them will change, as our habits

of thought will change; and each new philosopher will find his chief employment in showing that before him no one understood anything. But the drama of history is imperishable, and the lessons of it will be like what we learn from Homer or Shakespeare—lessons for which we have no words.

The address of history is less to the understanding than to the higher emotions. We learn in it to sympathize with what is great and good; we learn to hate what is base. In the anomalies of fortune we feel the mystery of our mortal existence, and in the companionship of the illustrious natures who have shaped the fortunes of the world, we escape from the littlenesses which cling to the round of common life, and our minds are tuned in a higher and nobler key.

For the rest, and for those large questions which I touched in connection with Mr Buckle, we live in times of disintegration, and none can tell what will be after us. What opinions—what convictions—the infant of to-day will find prevailing on the earth, if he and it live out together to the middle of another century, only a very bold man would undertake to conjecture! 'The time will come,' said Lichtenberg, in scorn at the materializing tendencies of modern thought; 'the time will come when the belief in God will be as the tales with which old women frighten children; when the world will be a machine, the ether a gas, and God will be a force.' Mankind, if they last long enough on the earth, may develope strange things out of themselves; and the growth of what is called the Positive Philosophy

is a curious commentary on Lichtenberg's prophecy. But whether the end be seventy years hence, or seven hundred—be the close of the mortal history of humanity as far distant in the future as its shadowy beginnings seem now to lie behind us—this only we may foretell with confidence—that the riddle of man's nature will remain unsolved. There will be that in him yet which physical laws will fail to explain—that something, whatever it be, in himself, and in the world, which science cannot fathom, and which suggests the unknown possibilities of his origin and his destiny. There will remain yet

> Those obstinate questionings
> Of sense and outward things;
> Falling from us, vanishings—
> Blank misgivings of a creature
> Moving about in worlds not realized—
> High instincts, before which our mortal nature
> Doth tremble like a guilty thing surprised.

There will remain

> Those first affections—
> Those shadowy recollections—
> Which, be they what they may,
> Are yet the fountain-light of all our day—
> Are yet the master-light of all our seeing—
> Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
> Our noisy years seem moments in the being
> Of the Eternal Silence.

TIMES OF ERASMUS AND LUTHER:

THREE LECTURES

DELIVERED AT NEWCASTLE, 1867.

I.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—I do not know whether I have made a very wise selection in the subject which I have chosen for these Lectures. There was a time—a time which, measured by the years of our national life, was not so very long ago—when the serious thoughts of mankind were occupied exclusively by religion and politics. The small knowledge which they possessed of other things was tinctured by their speculative opinions on the relations of heaven and earth; and, down to the sixteenth century, art, science, scarcely even literature, existed in this country, except as, in some way or other, subordinate to theology. Philosophers—such philosophers as there were—obtained and half deserved the reputation of quacks and conjurers. Astronomy was confused with astrology.

The physician's medicines were supposed to be powerless, unless the priests said prayers over them. The great lawyers, the ambassadors, the chief ministers of state, were generally bishops; even the fighting business was not entirely secular. Half-a-dozen Scotch prelates were killed at Flodden; and, late in the reign of Henry the Eighth, no fitter person could be found than Rowland Lee, Bishop of Coventry, to take command of the Welsh Marches, and harry the freebooters of Llangollen.

Every single department of intellectual or practical life was penetrated with the beliefs, or was interwoven with the interests, of the clergy; and thus it was that, when differences of religious opinion arose, they split society to its foundations. The lines of cleavage penetrated everywhere, and there were no subjects whatever in which those who disagreed in theology possessed any common concern. When men quarrelled, they quarrelled altogether. The disturbers of settled beliefs were regarded as public enemies who had placed themselves beyond the pale of humanity, and were considered fit only to be destroyed like wild beasts, or trampled out like the seed of a contagion.

Three centuries have passed over our heads since the time of which I am speaking, and the world is so changed that we can hardly recognize it as the same.

The secrets of nature have been opened out to us on a thousand lines; and men of science of all creeds can pursue side by side their common investigations. Catholics, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Lutherans, Calvinists,

contend with each other in honourable rivalry in arts, and literature, and commerce, and industry. They read the same books. They study at the same academies. They have seats in the same senates. They preside together on the judicial bench, and carry on, without jar or difference, the ordinary business of the country.

Those who share the same pursuits are drawn in spite of themselves into sympathy and good-will. When they are in harmony in so large a part of their occupations, the points of remaining difference lose their venom. Those who thought they hated each other, unconsciously find themselves friends; and as far as it affects the world at large, the acrimony of controversy has almost disappeared.

Imagine, if you can, a person being now put to death for a speculative theological opinion. You feel at once, that in the most bigoted country in the world such a thing has become impossible; and the impossibility is the measure of the alteration which we have all undergone. The formulas remain as they were on either side—the very same formulas which were once supposed to require these detestable murders. But we have learnt to know each other better. The cords which bind together the brotherhood of mankind are woven of a thousand strands. We do not any more fly apart or become enemies, because, here and there, in one strand out of so many, there are still unsound places.

If I were asked for a distinct proof that Europe was improving and not retrograding, I should find it in

this phenomenon. It has not been brought about by controversy. Men are fighting still over the same questions which they began to fight about at the Reformation. Protestant divines have not driven Catholics out of the field, nor Catholics, Protestants. Each polemic writes for his own partisans, and makes no impression on his adversary.

Controversy has kept alive a certain quantity of bitterness; and that, I suspect, is all that it would accomplish if it continued till the day of judgment. I sometimes, in impatient moments, wish the laity in Europe would treat their controversial divines as two gentlemen once treated their seconds, when they found themselves forced into a duel without knowing what they were quarrelling about.

As the principals were being led up to their places, one of them whispered to the other, 'If you will shoot your second, I will shoot mine.'

The reconciliation of parties, if I may use such a word, is no tinkered-up truce, or convenient Interim. It is the healthy, silent, spontaneous growth of a nobler order of conviction, which has conquered our prejudices even before we knew that they were assailed. This better spirit especially is represented in institutions like the present, which acknowledge no differences of creed —which are constructed on the broadest principles of toleration—and which, therefore, as a rule, are wisely protected from the intrusion of discordant subjects.

They exist, as I understand, to draw men together, not to divide them—to enable us to share together in

those topics of universal interest and instruction which all can take pleasure in, and which give offence to none.

If you ask me, then, why I am myself departing from a practice which I admit to be so excellent, I fear that I shall give you rather a lame answer. I might say that I know more about the history of the sixteenth century than I know about anything else. I have spent the best years of my life in reading and writing about it; and if I have anything to tell you worth your hearing, it is probably on that subject.

Or, again, I might say—which is indeed most true—that to the Reformation we can trace, indirectly, the best of those very influences which I have been describing. The Reformation broke the theological shackles in which men's minds were fettered. It set them thinking, and so gave birth to science. The reformers also, without knowing what they were about, taught the lesson of religious toleration. They attempted to supersede one set of dogmas by another. They succeeded with half the world—they failed with the other half. In a little while it became apparent that good men—without ceasing to be good—could think differently about theology, and that goodness, therefore, depended on something else than the holding orthodox opinions.

It is not, however, for either of these reasons that I am going to talk to you about Martin Luther: nor is toleration of differences of opinion, however excellent it be, the point on which I shall dwell in these Lectures.

Were the Reformation a question merely of opinion,

I for one should not have meddled with it, either here or anywhere. I hold that, on the obscure mysteries of faith, every one should be allowed to believe according to his conscience, and that arguments on such matters are either impertinent or useless.

But the Reformation, gentlemen, beyond the region of opinions, was a historical fact—an objective something which may be studied like any of the facts of nature. The Reformers were men of note and distinction, who played a great part for good or evil on the stage of the world. If we except the Apostles, no body of human beings ever printed so deep a mark into the organization of society; and if there be any value or meaning in history at all, the lives, the actions, the characters of such men as these can be matters of indifference to none of us.

We have not to do with a story which is buried in obscure antiquity. The facts admit of being learnt. The truth, whatever it was, concerns us all equally. If the divisions created by that great convulsion are ever to be obliterated, it will be when we have learnt, each of us, to see the thing as it really was, and not rather some mythical or imaginative version of the thing—such as from our own point of view we like to think it was. Fiction in such matters may be convenient for our immediate theories, but it is certain to avenge itself in the end. We may make our own opinions, but facts were made for us; and if we evade or deny them, it will be the worse for us.

Unfortunately, the mythical version at present very

largely preponderates. Open a Protestant history of the Reformation, and you will find a picture of the world given over to a lying tyranny—the Christian population of Europe enslaved by a corrupt and degraded priesthood, and the Reformers, with the Bible in their hands, coming to the rescue like angels of light. All is black on one side—all is fair and beautiful on the other.

Turn to a Catholic history of the same events and the same men, and we have before us the Church of the Saints fulfilling quietly its blessed mission in the saving of human souls. Satan a second time enters into Paradise, and a second time with fatal success tempts miserable man to his ruin. He disbelieves his appointed teachers, he aspires after forbidden knowledge, and at once anarchy breaks loose. The seamless robe of the Saviour is rent in pieces, and the earth becomes the habitation of fiends.

Each side tells the story as it prefers to have it; facts, characters, circumstances, are melted in the theological crucible, and cast in moulds diametrically opposite. Nothing remains the same except the names and dates. Each side chooses its own witnesses. Everything is credible which makes for what it calls the truth. Everything is made false which will not fit into its place. 'Blasphemous fables' is the usual expression in Protestant controversial books for the accounts given by Catholics. 'Protestant tradition,' says an eminent modern Catholic, 'is based on lying—bold, wholesale, unscrupulous lying.'

Now, depend upon it, there is some human account of the matter different from both these if we could only get at it, and it will be an excellent thing for the world when that human account can be made out. I am not so presumptuous as to suppose that I can give it to you; still less can you expect me to try to do so within the compass of two or three lectures. If I cannot do everything, however, I believe I can do a little; at any rate I can give you a sketch, such as you may place moderate confidence in, of the state of the Church as it was before the Reformation began. I will not expose myself more than I can help to the censure of the divine who was so hard on Protestant tradition. Most of what I shall have to say to you this evening will be taken from the admissions of Catholics themselves, or from official records earlier than the outbreak of the controversy, when there was no temptation to pervert the truth.

Here, obviously, is the first point on which we require accurate information. If all was going on well, the Reformers really and truly told innumerable lies, and deserve all the reprobation which we can give them. If all was not going on well—if, so far from being well, the Church was so corrupt that Europe could bear with it no longer—then clearly a Reformation was necessary of some kind; and we have taken one step towards a fair estimate of the persons concerned in it.

A fair estimate—that, and only that, is what we want. I need hardly observe to you, that opinion in England has been undergoing lately a very considerable alteration about these persons.

Two generations ago, the leading Reformers were looked upon as little less than saints; now a party has risen up who intend, as they frankly tell us, to un-Protestantize the Church of England, who detest Protestantism as a kind of infidelity, who desire simply to reverse everything which the Reformers did.

One of these gentlemen, a clergyman writing lately of Luther, called him a heretic, a heretic fit only to be ranked with—whom, do you think?—Joe Smith, the Mormon Prophet. Joe Smith and Luther—that is the combination with which we are now presented.

The book in which this remarkable statement appeared was presented by two bishops to the Upper House of Convocation. It was received with gracious acknowledgments by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and was placed solemnly in the library of reference, for that learned body to consult.

So, too, a professor at Oxford, the other day, spoke of Luther as a Philistine—a Philistine meaning an oppressor of the chosen people; the enemy of men of culture, and intelligence, such as the professor himself.

One notices these things, not as of much importance in themselves, but as showing which way the stream is running; and, curiously enough, in quite another direction we may see the same phenomenon. Our liberal philosophers, men of high literary power and reputation, looking into the history of Luther, and Calvin, and John Knox, and the rest, find them falling far short of the philosophic ideal—wanting sadly in many qualities which the liberal mind cannot dispense

with. They are discovered to be intolerant, dogmatic, narrow-minded, inclined to persecute Catholics as Catholics had persecuted them; to be, in fact, little if at all better than the popes and cardinals whom they were fighting against.

Lord Macaulay can hardly find epithets strong enough to express his contempt for Archbishop Cranmer. Mr Buckle places Cranmer by the side of Bonner, and hesitates which of the two characters is the more detestable.

An unfavourable estimate of the Reformers, whether just or unjust, is unquestionably gaining ground among our advanced thinkers. A greater man than either Macaulay or Buckle—the German poet, Goethe—says of Luther, that he threw back the intellectual progress of mankind for centuries, by calling in the passions of the multitude to decide on subjects which ought to have been left to the learned. Goethe, in saying this, was alluding especially to Erasmus. Goethe thought that Erasmus, and men like Erasmus, had struck upon the right track; and if they could have retained the direction of the mind of Europe, there would have been more truth, and less falsehood, among us at this present time. The party hatreds, the theological rivalries, the persecutions, the civil wars, the religious animosities which have so long distracted us, would have been all avoided, and the mind of mankind would have expanded gradually and equably with the growth of knowledge.

Such an opinion, coming from so great a man, is not to be lightly passed over. It will be my endeavour

to show you what kind of man Erasmus was, what he was aiming at, what he was doing, and how Luther spoilt his work—if spoiling is the word which we are to use for it.

One caution, however, I must in fairness give you before we proceed further. It lies upon the face of the story, that the Reformers imperfectly understood toleration; but you must keep before you the spirit and temper of the men with whom they had to deal. For themselves, when the movement began, they aimed at nothing but liberty to think and speak their own way. They never dreamt of interfering with others, although they were quite aware that others, when they could, were likely to interfere with them. Lord Macaulay might have remembered that Cranmer was working all his life with the prospect of being burnt alive as his reward—and, as we all know, he actually was burnt alive.

When the Protestant teaching began first to spread in the Netherlands—before one single Catholic had been ill-treated there, before a symptom of a mutinous disposition had shown itself among the people, an edict was issued by the authorities for the suppression of the new opinions.

The terms of this edict I will briefly describe to you.

The inhabitants of the United Provinces were informed that they were to hold and believe the doctrines of the Holy Roman Catholic Church. 'Men and women,' says the edict, 'who disobey this command shall be punished as disturbers of public order. Women

who have fallen into heresy shall be buried alive. Men, if they recant, shall lose their heads. If they continue obstinate, they shall be burnt at the stake.

'If man or woman be suspected of heresy, no one shall shelter or protect him or her; and no stranger shall be admitted to lodge in any inn or dwelling-house unless he bring with him a testimonial of orthodoxy from the priest of his parish.

'The Inquisition shall inquire into the private opinions of every person, of whatever degree; and all officers of all kinds shall assist the Inquisition at their peril. Those who know where heretics are concealed, shall denounce them, or they shall suffer as heretics themselves. Heretics (observe the malignity of this paragraph)—heretics who will give up other heretics to justice, shall themselves be pardoned if they will promise to conform for the future.'

Under this edict, in the Netherlands alone, more than fifty thousand human beings, first and last, were deliberately murdered. And, gentlemen, I must say that proceedings of this kind explain and go far to excuse the subsequent intolerance of Protestants.

Intolerance, Mr Gibbon tells us, is a greater crime in a Protestant than a Catholic. Criminal intolerance, as I understand it, is the intolerance of such an edict as that which I have read to you—the unprovoked intolerance of difference of opinion. I conceive that the most enlightened philosopher might have grown hard and narrow-minded if he had suffered under the administration of the Duke of Alva.

Dismissing these considerations, I will now go on with my subject.

Never in all their history, in ancient times or modern, never that we know of, have mankind thrown out of themselves anything so grand, so useful, so beautiful, as the Catholic Church once was. In these times of ours, well-regulated selfishness is the recognized rule of action—every one of us is expected to look out first for himself, and take care of his own interests. At the time I speak of, the Church ruled the State with the authority of a conscience; and self-interest, as a motive of action, was only named to be abhorred. The bishops and clergy were regarded freely and simply as the immediate ministers of the Almighty; and they seem to me to have really deserved that high estimate of their character. It was not for the doctrines which they taught only, or chiefly, that they were held in honour. Brave men do not fall down before their fellow-mortals for the words which they speak, or for the rites which they perform. Wisdom, justice, self-denial, nobleness, purity, highmindedness,—these are the qualities before which the free-born races of Europe have been contented to bow; and in no order of men were such qualities to be found as they were found six hundred years ago in the clergy of the Catholic Church. They called themselves the successors of the Apostles. They claimed in their Master's name universal spiritual authority, but they made good their pretensions by the holiness of their own lives. They were allowed to rule because they deserved to rule, and in the fulness of re-

verence kings and nobles bent before a power which was nearer to God than their own. Over prince and subject, chieftain and serf, a body of unarmed defenceless men reigned supreme by the magic of sanctity. They tamed the fiery northern warriors who had broken in pieces the Roman Empire. They taught them—they brought them really and truly to believe—that they had immortal souls, and that they would one day stand at the awful judgment bar and give account for their lives there. With the brave, the honest, and the good—with those who had not oppressed the poor nor removed their neighbour's landmark—with those who had been just in all their dealings—with those who had fought against evil, and had tried valiantly to do their Master's will,—at that great day, it would be well. For cowards, for profligates, for those who lived for luxury and pleasure and self-indulgence, there was the blackness of eternal death.

An awful conviction of this tremendous kind the clergy had effectually instilled into the mind of Europe. It was not a PERHAPS; it was a certainty. It was not a form of words repeated once a week at church; it was an assurance entertained on all days and in all places, without any particle of doubt. And the effect of such a belief on life and conscience was simply immeasurable.

I do not pretend that the clergy were perfect. They were very far from perfect at the best of times, and the European nations were never completely submissive to them. It would not have been well if they

had been. The business of human creatures in this planet is not summed up in the most excellent of priestly catechisms. The world and its concerns continued to interest men, though priests insisted on their nothingness. They could not prevent kings from quarrelling with each other. They could not hinder disputed successions, and civil feuds, and wars, and political conspiracies. What they did do was to shelter the weak from the strong.

In the eyes of the clergy, the serf and his lord stood on the common level of sinful humanity. Into their ranks high birth was no passport. They were themselves for the most part children of the people; and the son of the artisan or peasant rose to the mitre and the triple crown, just as now-a-days the rail-splitter and the tailor become Presidents of the Republic of the West.

The Church was essentially democratic, while at the same time it had the monopoly of learning; and all the secular power fell to it which learning, combined with sanctity and assisted by superstition, can bestow.

The privileges of the clergy were extraordinary. They were not amenable to the common laws of the land. While they governed the laity, the laity had no power over them. From the throne downwards, every secular office was dependent on the Church. No king was a lawful sovereign till the Church placed the crown upon his head: and what the Church bestowed, the Church claimed the right to take away. The disposition of property was in their hands. No will

could be proved except before the bishop or his officer; and no will was held valid if the testator died out of communion. There were magistrates and courts of law for the offences of the laity. If a priest committed a crime, he was a sacred person. The civil power could not touch him; he was reserved for his ordinary. Bishops' commissaries sat in town and city, taking cognizance of the moral conduct of every man and woman. Offences against life and property were tried here in England, as now, by the common law; but the Church Courts dealt with sins—sins of word or act. If a man was a profligate or a drunkard; if he lied or swore; if he did not come to communion, or held unlawful opinions; if he was idle or unthrifty; if he was unkind to his wife or his servants; if a child was disobedient to his father, or a father cruel to his child; if a tradesman sold adulterated wares, or used false measures or dishonest weights,—the eye of the parish priest was everywhere, and the Church Court stood always open to examine and to punish.

Imagine what a tremendous power this must have been! Yet it existed generally in Catholic Europe down to the eve of the Reformation. It could never have established itself at all unless at one time it had worked beneficially—as the abuse of it was one of the most fatal causes of the Church's fall.

I know nothing in English history much more striking than the answer given by Archbishop Warham to the complaints of the English House of Commons after the fall of Cardinal Wolsey. The House of Com-

mons complained that the clergy made laws in Convocation which the laity were excommunicated if they disobeyed. Yet the laws made by the clergy, the Commons said, were often at variance with the laws of the realm.

What did Warham reply? He said he was sorry for the alleged discrepancy; but, inasmuch as the laws made by the clergy were always in conformity with the will of God, the laws of the realm had only to be altered and then the difficulty would vanish.

What must have been the position of the clergy in the fulness of their power, when they could speak thus on the eve of their prostration? You have only to look from a distance at any old-fashioned cathedral city, and you will see in a moment the mediæval relations between Church and State. The cathedral *is* the city. The first object you catch sight of as you approach is the spire tapering into the sky, or the huge towers holding possession of the centre of the landscape—majestically beautiful—imposing by mere size amidst the large forms of Nature herself. As you go nearer, the vastness of the building impresses you more and more. The puny dwelling-places of the citizens creep at its feet, the pinnacles are glittering in the tints of the sunset, when down below among the streets and lanes the twilight is darkening. And even now, when the towns are thrice their ancient size, and the houses have stretched upwards from two stories to five; when the great chimneys are vomiting their smoke among the clouds, and the temples of modern industry—the

workshops and the factories—spread their long fronts before the eye, the cathedral is still the governing form in the picture—the one object which possesses the imagination and refuses to be eclipsed.

As that cathedral was to the old town, so was the Church of the middle ages to the secular institutions of the world. Its very neighbourhood was sacred; and its shadow, like the shadow of the Apostles, was a sanctuary. When I look at the new Houses of Parliament in London, I see in them a type of the change which has passed over us. The House of Commons of the Plantagenets sat in the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey. The Parliament of the Reform Bill, five-and-thirty years ago, debated in St Stephen's Chapel, the Abbey's small dependency. Now, by the side of the enormous pile which has risen out of that chapel's ashes, the proud Minster itself is dwarfed into insignificance.

Let us turn to another vast feature of the middle ages—I mean the monasteries.

Some person of especial and exceptional holiness has lived or died at a particular spot. He has been distinguished by his wisdom, by his piety, by his active benevolence; and in an age when conjurers and witches were supposed to be helped by the devil to do evil, he, on his part, has been thought to have possessed in larger measure than common men the favour and the grace of heaven. Blessed influences hang about the spot which he has hallowed by his presence. His relics—his household possessions, his books, his clothes,

his bones, retain the shadowy sanctity which they received in having once belonged to him. We all set a value, not wholly unreal, on anything which has been the property of a remarkable man. At worst, it is but an exaggeration of natural reverence.

Well, as now-a-days we build monuments to great men, so in the middle ages they built shrines or chapels on the spots which saints had made holy, and communities of pious people gathered together there—beginning with the personal friends the saint had left behind him—to try to live as he had lived, to do good as he had done good, and to die as he had died. Thus arose religious fraternities — companies of men who desired to devote themselves to goodness—to give up pleasure, and amusement, and self-indulgence, and to spend their lives in prayer and works of charity.

These houses became centres of pious beneficence The monks, as the brotherhoods were called, were organized in different orders, with some variety of rule, but the broad principle was the same in all. They were to live for others, not for themselves. They took vows of poverty, that they might not be entangled in the pursuit of money. They took vows of chastity, that the care of a family might not distract them from the work which they had undertaken. Their efforts of charity were not limited to this world. Their days were spent in hard bodily labour, in study, or in visiting the sick. At night they were on the stone-floors of their chapels, holding up their withered hands to heaven, interceding for the poor souls who were suffering in purgatory.

The world, as it always will, paid honour to exceptional excellence. The system spread to the furthest limits of Christendom. The religious houses became places of refuge, where men of noble birth, kings and queens and emperors, warriors and statesmen, retired to lay down their splendid cares, and end their days in peace. Those with whom the world had dealt hardly, or those whom it had surfeited with its unsatisfying pleasures, those who were disappointed with earth, and those who were filled with passionate aspirations after heaven, alike found a haven of rest in the quiet cloister. And, gradually, lands came to them, and wealth, and social dignity—all gratefully extended to men who deserved so well of their fellows; while no landlords were more popular than they, for the sanctity of the monks sheltered their dependents as well as themselves.

Travel now through Ireland, and you will see in the wildest parts of it innumerable remains of religious houses, which had grown up among a people who acknowledged no rule among themselves except the sword, and where every chief made war upon his neighbour as the humour seized him. The monks among the O's and the Mac's were as defenceless as sheep among the wolves; but the wolves spared them for their character. In such a country as Ireland then was, the monasteries could not have survived for a generation but for the enchanted atmosphere which surrounded them.

Of authority the religious orders were practically

independent. They were amenable only to the Pope and to their own superiors. Here in England, the king could not send a commissioner to inspect a monastery, nor even send a policeman to arrest a criminal who had taken shelter within its walls. Archbishops and bishops, powerful as they were, found their authority cease when they entered the gates of a Benedictine or Dominican abbey.

So utterly have times changed, that with your utmost exertions you will hardly be able to picture to yourselves the Catholic Church in the days of its greatness. Our school-books tell us how the Emperor of Germany held the stirrup for Pope Gregory the Seventh to mount his mule; how our own English Henry Plantagenet walked barefoot through the streets of Canterbury, and knelt in the Chapter House for the monks to flog him. The first of these incidents, I was brought up to believe, proved the Pope to be the man of Sin. Anyhow, they are both facts, and not romances; and you may form some notion from them how high in the world's eyes the Church must have stood.

And be sure it did not achieve that proud position without deserving it. The Teutonic and Latin princes were not credulous fools; and when they submitted, it was to something stronger than themselves—stronger in limb and muscle, or stronger in intellect and character.

So the Church was in its vigour: so the Church was *not* at the opening of the sixteenth century. Power—wealth—security—men are more than mortal if they

can resist the temptations to which too much of these expose them. Nor were they the only enemies which undermined the energies of the Catholic clergy. Churches exist in this world to remind us of the eternal laws which we are bound to obey. So far as they do this, they fulfil their end, and are honoured in fulfilling it. It would have been better for all of us—it would be better for us now, could Churches keep this their peculiar function steadily and singly before them. Unfortunately, they have preferred in later times the speculative side of things to the practical. They take up into their teaching opinions and theories which are merely ephemeral; which would naturally die out with the progress of knowledge; but, having received a spurious sanctity, prolong their days unseasonably, and become first unmeaning, and then occasions of superstition.

It matters little whether I say a paternoster in English or Latin, so that what is present to my mind is the thought which the words express, and not the words themselves. In these and all languages it is the most beautiful of prayers. But you know that people came to look on a Latin paternoster as the most powerful of spells—potent in heaven, if said straightforward; if repeated backward, a charm which no spirit in hell could resist.

So it is in my opinion with all forms—forms of words, or forms of ceremony and ritualism. While the meaning is alive in them, they are not only harmless, but pregnant and life-giving. When we come to think

that they possess in themselves material and magical virtues, then the purpose which they answer is to hide God from us and make us practically into Atheists.

This is what I believe to have gradually fallen upon the Catholic Church in the generations which preceded Luther. The body remained; the mind was gone away: the original thought which its symbolism represented was no longer credible to intelligent persons.

The acute were conscious unbelievers. In Italy, when men went to mass they spoke of it as going to a comedy. You may have heard the story of Luther in his younger days saying mass at an altar in Rome, and hearing his fellow-priests muttering at the consecration of the Eucharist, 'Bread thou art, and bread thou wilt remain.'

Part of the clergy were profane scoundrels like these; the rest repeated the words of the service, conceiving that they were working a charm. Religion was passing through the transformation which all religions have a tendency to undergo. They cease to be aids and incentives to holy life; they become contrivances rather to enable men to sin, and escape the penalties of sin. Obedience to the law is dispensed with if men will diligently profess certain opinions, or punctually perform certain external duties. However scandalous the moral life, the participation of a particular rite, or the profession of a particular belief, at the moment of death, is held to clear the score.

The powers which had been given to the clergy required for their exercise the highest wisdom and the

highest probity. They had fallen at last into the hands of men who possessed considerably less of these qualities than the laity whom they undertook to govern. They had degraded their conceptions of God; and, as a necessary consequence, they had degraded their conceptions of man and man's duty. The aspirations after sanctity had disappeared, and instead of them there remained the practical reality of the five senses. The high prelates, the cardinals, the great abbots, were occupied chiefly in maintaining their splendour and luxury. The friars and the secular clergy, following their superiors with shorter steps, indulged themselves in grosser pleasures; while their spiritual powers, their supposed authority in this world and the next, were turned to account to obtain from the laity the means for their self-indulgence.

The Church forbade the eating of meat on fast days, but the Church was ready with dispensations for those who could afford to pay for them. The Church forbade marriage to the fourth degree of consanguinity, but loving cousins, if they were rich and open-handed, could obtain the Church's consent to their union. There were toll-gates for the priests at every halting-place on the road of life—fees at weddings, fees at funerals, fees whenever an excuse could be found to fasten them. Even when a man was dead he was not safe from plunder, for a mortuary or death present was exacted of his family.

And then those Bishops' Courts, of which I spoke just now: they were founded for the discipline of

morality—they were made the instruments of the most detestable extortion. If an impatient layman spoke a disrespectful word of the clergy, he was cited before the bishop's commissary and fined. If he refused to pay, he was excommunicated, and excommunication was a poisonous disease. When a poor wretch was under the ban of the Church no tradesman might sell him clothes or food—no friend might relieve him—no human voice might address him, under pain of the same sentence; and if he died unreconciled, he died like a dog, without the sacraments, and was refused Christian burial.

The records of some of these courts survive: a glance at their pages will show the principles on which they were worked. When a layman offended, the single object was to make him pay for it. The magistrates could not protect him. If he resisted, and his friends supported him, so much the better, for they were now all in the scrape together. The next step would be to indict them in a body for heresy; and then, of course, there was nothing for it but to give way, and compound for absolution by money.

It was money—ever money. Even in case of real delinquency, it was still money. Money, not charity, covered the multitude of sins.

I have told you that the clergy were exempt from secular jurisdiction. They claimed to be amenable only to spiritual judges, and they extended the broad fringe of their order till the word clerk was construed to mean any one who could write his name or read a sentence from a book. A robber or a murderer at the assizes

had but to show that he possessed either of these qualifications, and he was allowed what was called benefit of clergy. His case was transferred to the Bishop's Court, to an easy judge, who allowed him at once to compound.

Such were the clergy in matters of this world. As religious instructors they appear in colours if possible less attractive.

Practical religion throughout Europe at the beginning of the sixteenth century was a very simple affair. I am not going to speak of the mysterious doctrines of the Catholic Church. The creed which it professed in its schools and theological treatises was the same which it professes now, and which it had professed at the time when it was most powerful for good. I do not myself consider that the formulas in which men express their belief are of much consequence. The question is rather of the thing expressed; and so long as we find a living consciousness that above the world and above human life there is a righteous God, who will judge men according to their works, whether they say their prayers in Latin or English, whether they call themselves Protestants or call themselves Catholics, appears to me of quite secondary importance. But at the time I speak of, that consciousness no longer existed. The formulas and ceremonies were all in all; and of God it is hard to say what conceptions men had formed, when they believed that a dead man's relations could buy him out of purgatory—buy him out of purgatory,—for this was the literal truth—by hiring priests to sing masses for his soul.

Religion, in the minds of ordinary people, meant that the keys of the other world were held by the clergy. If a man confessed regularly to his priest, received the sacrament, and was absolved, then all was well with him. His duties consisted in going to confession and to mass. If he committed sins, he was prescribed penances, which could be commuted for money. If he was sick or ill at ease in his mind, he was recommended a pilgrimage—a pilgrimage to a shrine or a holy well, or to some wonder-working image—where, for due consideration, his case would be attended to. It was no use to go to a saint empty-handed. The rule of the Church was, nothing for nothing. At a chapel in Saxony there was an image of a Virgin and Child. If the worshipper came to it with a good handsome offering, the child bowed and was gracious: if the present was unsatisfactory, it turned away its head, and withheld its favours till the purse-strings were untied again.

There was a great rood or crucifix of the same kind at Boxley, in Kent, where the pilgrims went in thousands. This figure used to bow, too, when it was pleased; and a good sum of money was sure to secure its good will.

When the Reformation came, and the police looked into the matter, the images were found to be worked with wires and pulleys. The German lady was kept as a curiosity in the cabinet of the Elector of Saxony. Our Boxley rood was brought up and exhibited in Cheapside, and was afterwards torn in pieces by the people.

Nor here again was death the limit of extortion: death was rather the gate of the sphere which the clergy made peculiarly their own. When a man died, his friends were naturally anxious for the fate of his soul. If he died in communion, he was not in the worst place of all. He had not been a saint, and therefore he was not in the best. Therefore he was in purgatory—Purgatory Pickpurse, as our English Latimer called it—and a priest, if properly paid, could get him out.

To be a mass priest, as it was called, was a regular profession, in which, with little trouble, a man could earn a comfortable living. He had only to be ordained and to learn by heart a certain form of words, and that was all the equipment necessary for him. The masses were paid for at so much a dozen, and for every mass that was said, so many years were struck off from the penal period. Two priests were sometimes to be seen muttering away at the opposite ends of the same altar, like a couple of musical boxes playing different parts of the same tune at the same time. It made no difference. The upper powers had what they wanted. If they got the masses, and the priests got the money, all parties concerned were satisfied.

I am speaking of the form which these things assumed in an age of degradation and ignorance. The truest and wisest words ever spoken by man might be abused in the same way.

The Sermon on the Mount or the Apostles' Creed if recited mechanically, and relied on to work a mechan-

ical effort, would be no less perniciously idolatrous.

You can see something of the same kind in a milder form in Spain at the present day. The Spaniards, all of them, high and low, are expected to buy annually, a Pope's Bula or Bull—a small pardon, or indulgence, or plenary remission of sins. The exact meaning of these things is a little obscure; the high authorities themselves do not universally agree about them, except so far as to say that they are of prodigious value of some sort. The orthodox explanation, I believe, is something of this kind. With every sin there is the moral guilt and the temporal penalty. The pardon cannot touch the guilt; but when the guilt is remitted, there is still the penalty. I may ruin my health by a dissolute life; I may repent of my dissoluteness and be forgiven; but the bad health will remain. For bad health, substitute penance in this world and purgatory in the next; and in this sphere the indulgence takes effect.

Such as they are, at any rate, everybody in Spain has these bulls; you buy them in the shops for a shilling apiece.

This is one form of the thing. Again, at the door of a Spanish church you will see hanging on the wall an intimation that whoever will pray so many hours before a particular image shall receive full forgiveness of his sins. Having got that, one might suppose he would be satisfied; but no—if he prays so many more hours, he can get off a hundred years of purgatory, or a thousand, or ten thousand. In one place I remember

observing that for a very little trouble a man could escape a hundred and fifty thousand years of purgatory.

What a prospect for the ill-starred Protestant, who will be lucky if he is admitted into purgatory at all.

Again, if you enter a sacristy, you will see a small board like the notices addressed to parishioners in our vestries. On particular days it is taken out and hung up in the church, and little would a stranger, ignorant of the language, guess the tremendous meaning of that commonplace appearance. On these boards is written 'Hoy se sacan animas,'—'This day, souls are taken out of purgatory.' It is an intimation to every one with a friend in distress that now is his time. You put a shilling in a plate, you give your friend's name, and the thing is done. One wonders why, if purgatory can be sacked so easily, any poor wretch is left to suffer there.

Such practices now-a-days are comparatively innocent, the money asked and given is trifling, and probably no one concerned in the business believes much about it. They serve to show, however, on a small scale, what once went on on an immense scale; and even such as they are, pious Catholics do not much approve of them. They do not venture to say much on the subject directly, but they allow themselves a certain good-humoured ridicule. A Spanish novelist of some reputation tells a story of a man coming to a priest on one of these occasions, putting a shilling in the plate, and giving in the name of his friend.

'Is my friend's soul out?' he asked. The priest

said it was. 'Quite sure?' the man asked. 'Quite sure,' the priest answered. 'Very well,' said the man, if he is out of purgatory they will not put him in again: it is a bad shilling.'

Sadder than all else, even as the most beautiful things are worst in their degradation, was the condition of the monasteries. I am here on delicate ground. The accounts of those institutions, as they existed in England and Germany at the time of their suppression, is so shocking that even impartial writers have hesitated to believe the reports which have come down to us. The laity, we are told, determined to appropriate the abbey lands, and maligned the monks to justify the spoliation. Were the charge true, the religious orders would still be without excuse, for the whole education of the country was in the hands of the clergy; and they had allowed a whole generation to grow up, which, on this hypothesis, was utterly depraved.

But no such theory can explain away the accumulated testimony which comes to us—exactly alike—from so many sides and witnesses. We are not dependent upon evidence which Catholics can decline to receive. In the reign of our Henry the Seventh the notorious corruption of some of the great abbeys in England brought them under the notice of the Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Morton. The Archbishop, unable to meddle with them by his own authority, obtained the necessary powers from the Pope. He instituted a partial visitation in the neighbourhood of London; and the most malignant Protestant never

drew such a picture of profligate brutality as Cardinal Morton left behind him in his Register, in a description of the great Abbey of St Albans. I cannot, in a public lecture, give you the faintest idea of what it contains. The monks were bound to celibacy—that is to say, they were not allowed to marry. They were full-fed, idle, and sensual; of sin they thought only as something extremely pleasant, of which they could cleanse one another with a few mumbled words as easily as they could wash their faces in a basin. And there I must leave the matter. Anybody who is curious for particulars may see the original account in Morton's Register, in the Archbishop's library at Lambeth.

A quarter of a century after this there appeared in Germany a book, now called by Catholics an infamous libel, the 'Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum.' 'The obscure men,' supposed to be the writers of these epistles, are monks or students of theology. The letters themselves are written in dog-Latin—a burlesque of the language in which ecclesiastical people then addressed each other. They are sketches, satirical, but not malignant, of the moral and intellectual character of these reverend personages.

On the moral, and by far the most important, side of the matter I am still obliged to be silent; but I can give you a few specimens of the furniture of the theological minds, and of the subjects with which they were occupied.

A student writes to his ghostly father in an agony of distress because he has touched his hat to a Jew. He

mistook him for a doctor of divinity; and on the whole, he fears he has committed mortal sin. Can the father absolve him? Can the bishop absolve him? Can the Pope absolve him? His case seems utterly desperate.

Another letter describes a great intellectual riddle, which was argued for four days at the School of Logic at Louvaine. A certain Master of Arts had taken out his degree at Louvaine, Leyden, Paris, Oxford, Cambridge, Padua, and four other universities. He was thus a member of ten universities. But how *could* a man be a member of ten universities? A university was a body, and one body might have many members; but how one member could have many bodies, passed comprehension. In such a monstrous anomaly, the member would be the body, and the universities the member, and this would be a scandal to such grave and learned corporations. The holy doctor St Thomas himself could not make himself into the body of ten universities.

The more the learned men argued, the deeper they floundered, and at length gave up the problem in despair.

Again: a certain professor argues that Julius Cæsar could not have written the book which passes under the name of 'Cæsar's Commentaries,' because that book is written in Latin, and Latin is a difficult language; and a man whose life is spent in marching and fighting has notoriously no time to learn Latin.

Here is another fellow—a monk this one—describ-

ing to a friend the wonderful things which he has seen in Rome.

'You may have heard,' he says, 'how the Pope did possess a monstrous beast called an Elephant. The Pope did entertain for this beast a very great affection, and now behold it is dead. When it fell sick, the Pope called his doctors about him in great sorrow, and said to them, "If it be possible, heal my elephant." Then they gave the elephant a purge, which cost five hundred crowns, but it did not avail, and so the beast departed; and the Pope grieves much for his elephant, for it was indeed a miraculous beast, with a long, long, prodigious long nose; and when it saw the Pope it kneeled down before him and said, with a terrible voice, "Bar, bar, bar!"'

I will not tire you with any more of this nonsense, especially as I cannot give you the really characteristic parts of the book.

I want you to observe, however, what Sir Thomas More says of it, and nobody will question that Sir Thomas More was a good Catholic and a competent witness. 'These epistles,' he says, 'are the delight of every one. The wise enjoy the wit; the blockheads of monks take them seriously, and believe that they have been written to do them honour. When we laugh, they think we are laughing at the style, which they admit to be comical. But they think the style is made up for by the beauty of the sentiment. The scabbard, they say, is rough, but the blade within it is divine.

The deliberate idiots would not have found out the jest for themselves in a hundred years.'

Well might Erasmus exclaim, 'What fungus could be more stupid? yet these are the Atlases who are to uphold the tottering Church!'

'The monks had a pleasant time of it,' says Luther. 'Every brother had two cans of beer and a quart of wine for his supper, with gingerbread, to make him take to his liquor kindly. Thus the poor things came to look like fiery angels.'

And more gravely, 'In the cloister rule the seven deadly sins—covetousness, lasciviousness, uncleanness, hate, envy, idleness, and the loathing of the service of God.'

Consider such men as these owning a third, a half, sometimes two-thirds of the land in every country in Europe, and, in addition to their other sins, neglecting all the duties attaching to this property—the woods cut down and sold, the houses falling to ruin—unthrift, neglect, waste everywhere and in everything—the shrewd making the most of their time, which they had sense to see might be a short one—the rest dreaming on in sleepy sensuality, dividing their hours between the chapel, the pothouse, and the brothel.

I do not think that, in its main features, the truth of this sketch can be impugned; and if it be just even in outline, then a reformation of some kind or other was overwhelmingly necessary. Corruption beyond a certain point becomes unendurable to the coarsest nos-

tril. The constitution of human things cannot away with it.

Something was to be done; but what, or how? There were three possible courses.

Either the ancient discipline of the Church might be restored by the heads of the Church themselves.

Or, secondly, a higher tone of feeling might gradually be introduced among clergy and laity alike, by education and literary culture. The discovery of the printing press had made possible a diffusion of knowledge which had been unattainable in earlier ages. The ecclesiastical constitution, like a sick human body, might recover its tone if a better diet were prepared for it.

Or, lastly, the common sense of the laity might take the matter at once into their own hands, and make free use of the pruning knife and the sweeping brush. There might be much partial injustice, much violence, much wrongheadedness; but the people would, at any rate, go direct to the point, and the question was whether any other remedy would serve.

The first of these alternatives may at once be dismissed. The heads of the Church were the last persons in the world to discover that anything was wrong. People of that sort always are. For them the thing as it existed answered excellently well. They had boundless wealth, and all but boundless power. What could they ask for more? No monk drowsing over his wine-pot was less disturbed by anxiety than nine out of ten of the high dignitaries who were living on the eve of

the Judgment Day, and believed that their seat was established for them for ever.

The character of the great ecclesiastics of that day you may infer from a single example. The Archbishop of Mayence was one of the most enlightened Churchmen in Germany. He was a patron of the Renaissance, a friend of Erasmus, a liberal, an intelligent, and, as times went, and considering his trade, an honourable, high-minded man.

When the Emperor Maximilian died, and the imperial throne was vacant, the Archbishop of Mayence was one of seven electors who had to choose a new emperor.

There were two competitors—Francis the First and Maximilian's grandson, afterwards the well-known Charles the Fifth.

Well, of the seven electors six were bribed. John Frederick of Saxony, Luther's friend and protector, was the only one of the party who came out of the business with clean hands.

But the Archbishop of Mayence took bribes six times alternately from both the candidates. He took money as coolly as the most rascally ten-pound householder in Yarmouth or Totnes, and finally drove a hard bargain for his actual vote.

The grape does not grow upon the blackthorn; nor does healthy reform come from high dignitaries like the Archbishop of Mayence.

The other aspect of the problem I shall consider in the following Lectures.

II.

In the year 1467 — the year in which Charles the Bold became Duke of Burgundy—four years before the great battle of Barnet, which established our own fourth Edward on the English throne—about the time when William Caxton was setting up his printing press at Westminster—there was born at Rotterdam, on the 28th of October, Desiderius Erasmus. His parents, who were middle-class people, were well-to-do in the world. For some reason or other they were prevented from marrying by the interference of relations. The father died soon after in a cloister; the mother was left with her illegitimate infant, whom she called first, after his father, Gerard; but afterwards, from his beauty and grace, she changed his name—the words Desiderius Erasmus, one with a Latin, the other with a Greek, derivation, meaning the lovely or delightful one.

Not long after, the mother herself died also. The little Erasmus was the heir of a moderate fortune; and his guardians desiring to appropriate it to themselves, endeavoured to force him into a convent at Brabant.

The thought of living and dying in a house of religion was dreadfully unattractive; but an orphan boy's resistance was easily overcome. He was bullied into yielding, and, when about twenty, took the vows.

The life of a monk, which was uninviting on the surface, was not more lovely when seen from within.

A monk's holy obedience,' Erasmus wrote afterwards, 'consists in—what? In leading an honest, chaste, and sober life? Not the least. In acquiring learning, in study, and industry? Still less. A monk may be a glutton, a drunkard, a whoremonger, an ignorant, stupid, malignant, envious brute, but he has broken no vow, he is within his holy obedience. He has only to be the slave of a superior as good for nothing as himself, and he is an excellent brother.'

The misfortune of his position did not check Erasmus's intellectual growth. He was a brilliant, witty, sarcastic, mischievous youth. He did not trouble himself to pine and mope; but, like a young thoroughbred in a drove of asses, he used his heels pretty freely.

While he played practical jokes upon the unreverend fathers, he distinguished himself equally by his appetite for knowledge. It was the dawn of the Renaissance—the revival of learning. The discovery of printing was reopening to modern Europe the great literature of Greece and Rome, and the writings of the Christian fathers. For studies of this kind, Erasmus, notwithstanding the disadvantages of cowl and frock, displayed extraordinary aptitude. He taught himself Greek, when Greek was the language which, in the opinion of the monks, only the devils spoke in the wrong place. His Latin was as polished as Cicero's; and at length the Archbishop of Cambray heard of him, and sent him to the University of Paris.

At Paris he found a world where life could be sufficiently pleasant, but where his religious habit was every moment in his way. He was a priest, and so far could not help himself. That ink-spot not all the waters of the German Ocean could wash away. But he did not care for the low debaucheries, where the frock and cowl were at home. His place was in the society of cultivated men, who were glad to know him and to patronize him; so he shook off his order, let his hair grow, and flung away his livery.

The Archbishop's patronage was probably now withdrawn. Life in Paris was expensive, and Erasmus had for several years to struggle with poverty. We see him, however, for the most part—in his early letters—carrying a bold front to fortune; desponding one moment, and larking the next with a Paris grisette; making friends, enjoying good company, enjoying especially good wine when he could get it; and, above all, satiating his literary hunger at the library of the University.

In this condition, when about eight-and-twenty, he made acquaintance with two young English noblemen who were travelling on the Continent, Lord Mountjoy and one of the Greys.

Mountjoy, intensely attracted by his brilliance, took him for his tutor, carried him over to England, and introduced him at the court of Henry the Seventh. At once his fortune was made. He charmed every one, and in turn he was himself delighted with the country and the people. English character, English

hospitality, English manners — everything English except the beer—equally pleased him. In the young London men—the lawyers, the noblemen, even in some of the clergy—he found his own passion for learning. Sir Thomas More, who was a few years younger than himself, became his dearest friend; and Warham, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury—Fisher, afterwards Bishop of Rochester—Colet, the famous dean of St Paul's—the great Wolsey himself — recognized and welcomed the rising star of European literature.

Money flowed in upon him. Warham gave him a benefice in Kent, which was afterwards changed to a pension. Prince Henry, when he became King, offered him—kings in those days were not bad friends to literature—Henry offered him, if he would remain in England, a house large enough to be called a palace, and a pension which, converted into our money, would be a thousand pounds a year.

Erasmus, however, was a restless creature, and did not like to be caged or tethered. He declined the King's terms, and Mountjoy settled a pension on him instead. He had now a handsome income, and he understood the art of enjoying it. He moved about as he pleased—now to Cambridge, now to Oxford, and, as the humour took him, back again to Paris; now staying with Sir Thomas More at Chelsea, now going a pilgrimage with Dean Colet to Becket's tomb at Canterbury—but always studying, always gathering knowledge, and throwing it out again, steeped in his own mother wit, in shining Essays or Dialogues,

which were the delight and the despair of his contemporaries.

Everywhere, in his love of pleasure, in his habits of thought, in his sarcastic scepticism, you see the healthy, clever, well-disposed, tolerant, epicurean, intellectual man of the world.

He went, as I said, with Dean Colet to Becket's tomb. At a shrine about Canterbury he was shown an old shoe which tradition called the Saint's. At the tomb itself, the great sight was a handkerchief which a monk took from among the relics, and offered it to the crowd to kiss. The worshippers touched it in pious adoration, with clasped hands and upturned eyes. If the thing was genuine, as Erasmus observed, it had but served for the archbishop to wipe his nose with—and Dean Colet, a puritan before his time, looked on with eyes flashing scorn, and scarcely able to keep his hands off the exhibitors. But Erasmus smiled kindly, reflecting that mankind were fools, and in some form or other would remain fools. He took notice only of the pile of gold and jewels, and concluded that so much wealth might prove dangerous to its possessors.

The peculiarities of the English people interested and amused him. 'You are going to England,' he wrote afterwards to a friend; 'you will not fail to be pleased. You will find the great people there most agreeable and gracious; only be careful not to presume upon their intimacy. They will condescend to your level, but do not you therefore suppose that you stand upon theirs. The noble lords are gods in their own eyes.'

'For the other classes, be courteous, give your right hand, do not take the wall, do not push yourself. Smile on whom you please, but trust no one that you do not know; above all, speak no evil of England to them. They are proud of their country above all nations in the world, as they have good reason to be.'

These directions might have been written yesterday. The manners of the ladies have somewhat changed. 'English ladies,' says Erasmus, 'are divinely pretty, and *too* good-natured. They have an excellent custom among them, that wherever you go the girls kiss you. They kiss you when you come, they kiss you when you go, they kiss you at intervening opportunities, and their lips are soft, warm, and delicious.' Pretty well that for a priest!

The custom, perhaps, was not quite so universal as Erasmus would have us believe. His own coaxing ways may have had something to do with it. At any rate, he found England a highly agreeable place of residence.

Meanwhile, his reputation as a writer spread over the world. Latin—the language in which he wrote—was in universal use. It was the vernacular of the best society in Europe, and no living man was so perfect a master of it. His satire flashed about among all existing institutions, scathing especially his old enemies the monks; while the great secular clergy, who hated the religious orders, were delighted to see them scourged, and themselves to have the reputation of being patrons of toleration and reform.

Erasmus, as he felt his ground more sure under him,

obtained from Julius the Second a distinct release from his monastic vows; and, shortly after, when the brilliant Leo succeeded to the tiara, and gathered about him the magnificent cluster of artists who have made his era so illustrious, the new Pope invited Erasmus to visit him at Rome, and become another star in the constellation which surrounded the Papal throne.

Erasmus was at this time forty years old—the age when ambition becomes powerful in men, and takes the place of love of pleasure. He was received at Rome with princely distinction, and he could have asked for nothing—bishoprics, red hats, or red stockings—which would not have been freely given to him if he would have consented to remain.

But he was too considerable a man to be tempted by finery; and the Pope's livery, gorgeous though it might be, was but a livery after all. Nothing which Leo the Tenth could do for Erasmus could add lustre to his coronet. More money he might have had, but of money he had already abundance, and outward dignity would have been dearly bought by gilded chains. He resisted temptation; he preferred the northern air, where he could breathe at liberty, and he returned to England, half inclined to make his home there.

But his own sovereign laid claim to his services; the future emperor recalled him to the Low Countries, settled a handsome salary upon him, and established him at the University of Louvaine.

He was now in the zenith of his greatness. He had an income as large as many an English nobleman. We

find him corresponding with popes, cardinals, kings, and statesmen; and as he grew older, his mind became more fixed upon serious subjects. The ignorance and brutality of the monks, the corruption of the spiritual courts, the absolute irreligion in which the Church was steeped, gave him serious alarm. He had no enthusiasms, no doctrinal fanaticisms, no sectarian beliefs or superstitions. The breadth of his culture, his clear understanding, and the worldly moderation of his temper, seemed to qualify him above living men to conduct a temperate reform. He saw that the system around him was pregnant with danger, and he resolved to devote what remained to him of life to the introduction of a higher tone in the minds of the clergy.

The revival of learning had by this time alarmed the religious orders. Literature and education, beyond the code of the theological text-books, appeared simply devilish to them. When Erasmus returned to Louvaine, the battle was raging over the north of Europe.

The Dominicans at once recognized in Erasmus their most dangerous enemy. At first they tried to compel him to re-enter the order, but, strong in the Pope's dispensation, he was so far able to defy them. They could bark at his heels, but dared not come to closer quarters: and with his temper slightly ruffled, but otherwise contented to despise them, he took up boldly the task which he had set himself.

'We kiss the old shoes of the saints,' he said, 'but we never read their works.' He undertook the enormous labour of editing and translating selections from

the writings of the Fathers. The New Testament was as little known as the lost books of Tacitus—all that the people knew of the Gospels and the Epistles were the passages on which theologians had built up the Catholic formulas. Erasmus published the text, and with it, and to make it intelligible, a series of paraphrases, which rent away the veil of traditional and dogmatic interpretation, and brought the teaching of Christ and the Apostles into their natural relation with reason and conscience.

In all this, although the monks might curse, he had countenance and encouragement from the great ecclesiastics in all parts of Europe—and it is highly curious to see the extreme freedom with which they allowed him to propose to them his plans for a Reformation—we seem to be listening to the wisest of modern broad Churchmen.

To one of his correspondents, an archbishop, he writes:—

"Let us have done with theological refinements. There is an excuse for the Fathers, because the heretics forced them to define particular points; but every definition is a misfortune, and for us to persevere in the same way is sheer folly. Is no man to be admitted to grace who does not know how the Father differs from the Son, and both from the Spirit? or how the nativity of the Son differs from the procession of the Spirit? Unless I forgive my brother his sins against me, God will not forgive me my sins. Unless I have a pure heart—unless I put away envy, hate, pride, avarice,

lust, I shall not see God. But a man is not damned because he cannot tell whether the Spirit has one principle or two. Has he the fruits of the Spirit? That is the question. Is he patient, kind, good, gentle, modest, temperate, chaste? Inquire if you will, but do not define. True religion is peace, and we cannot have peace unless we leave the conscience unshackled on obscure points on which certainty is impossible. We hear now of questions being referred to the next Œcumenical Council—better a great deal refer them to doomsday. Time was, when a man's faith was looked for in his life, not in the Articles which he professed. Necessity first brought Articles upon us, and, ever since, we have refined and refined till Christianity has become a thing of words and creeds. Articles increase—sincerity vanishes away—contention grows hot, and charity grows cold. Then comes in the civil power, with stake and gallows, and men are forced to profess what they do not believe, to pretend to love what in fact they hate, and to say that they understand what in fact has no meaning for them.'

Again, to the Archbishop of Mayence:—

'Reduce the dogmas necessary to be believed, to the smallest possible number; you can do it without danger to the realities of Christianity. On other points, either discourage inquiry, or leave every one free to believe what he pleases—then we shall have no more quarrels, and religion will again take hold of life. When you have done this, you can correct the abuses of which the world with good reason complains. The unjust judge

heard the widow's prayer. You should not shut your ears to the cries of those for whom Christ died. He did not die for the great only, but for the poor and for the lowly. There need be no tumult. Do you only set human affections aside, and let kings and princes lend themselves heartily to the public good. But observe that the monks and friars be allowed no voice; with these gentlemen the world has borne too long. They care only for their own vanity, their own stomachs, their own power; and they believe that if the people are enlightened, their kingdom cannot stand.'

Once more, to the Pope himself:—

'Let each man amend first his own wicked life. When he has done that, and will amend his neighbour, let him put on Christian charity, which is severe enough when severity is needed. If your Holiness give power to men who neither believe in Christ nor care for you, but think only of their own appetites, I fear there will be danger. We can trust your Holiness, but there are bad men who will use your virtues as a cloak for their own malice.'

That the spiritual rulers of Europe should have allowed a man like Erasmus to use language such as this to them is a fact of supreme importance. It explains the feeling of Goethe, that the world would have gone on better had there been no Luther, and that the revival of theological fanaticism did more harm than good.

But the question of questions is, what all this latitudinarian philosophizing, this cultivated epicurean gracefulness, would have come to if left to itself; or rather,

what was the effect which it was inevitably producing? If you wish to remove an old building without bringing it in ruins about your ears, you must begin at the top, remove the stones gradually downwards, and touch the foundation last. But latitudinarianism loosens the elementary principles of theology. It destroys the premises on which the dogmatic system rests. It would beg the question to say that this would in itself have been undesirable; but the practical effect of it, as the world then stood, would have only been to make the educated into infidels, and to leave the multitude to a convenient but debasing superstition.

The monks said that Erasmus laid the egg, and Luther hatched a cockatrice. Erasmus resented deeply such an account of his work; but it was true after all. The sceptical philosophy is the most powerful of solvents, but it has no principle of organic life in it; and what of truth there was in Erasmus's teaching had to assume a far other form before it was available for the re-invigoration of religion. He himself, in his clearer moments, felt his own incapacity, and despaired of making an impression on the mass of ignorance with which he saw himself surrounded.

'The stupid monks,' he writes, 'say mass as a cobbler makes a shoe; they come to the altar reeking from their filthy pleasures. Confession with the monks is a cloak to steal the people's money, to rob girls of their virtue, and commit other crimes too horrible to name! Yet these people are the tyrants of Europe. The Pope himself is afraid of them.'

'Beware!' he says to an impetuous friend, 'beware how you offend the monks. You have to do with an enemy that cannot be slain; an order never dies, and they will not rest till they have destroyed you.

The heads of the Church might listen politely, but Erasmus had no confidence in them. 'Never,' he says, 'was there a time when divines were greater fools, or popes and prelates more worldly.' Germany was about to receive a signal illustration of the improvement which it was to look for from liberalism and intellectual culture.

We are now on the edge of the great conflagration. Here we must leave Erasmus for the present. I must carry you briefly over the history of the other great person who was preparing to play his part on the stage. You have seen something of what Erasmus was; you must turn next to the companion picture of Martin Luther. You will observe in how many points their early experiences touch, as if to show more vividly the contrast between the two men.

Sixteen years after the birth of Erasmus, therefore in the year 1483, Martin Luther came into the world in a peasant's cottage, at Eisleben, in Saxony. By peasant, you need not understand a common boor. Hans Luther, the father, was a thrifty, well-to-do man for his station in life—adroit with his hands, and able to do many useful things, from farm work to digging in the mines. The family life was strict and stern—rather too stern, as Martin thought in later life.

'Be temperate with your children,' he said, long

after, to a friend; 'punish them if they lie or steal, but be just in what you do. It is a lighter sin to take pears and apples than to take money. I shudder when I think of what I went through myself. My mother beat me about some nuts once till the blood came. I had a terrible time of it, but she meant well.'

At school, too, he fell into rough hands, and the recollection of his sufferings made him tender ever after with young boys and girls.

'Never be hard with children,' he used to say. 'Many a fine character has been ruined by the stupid brutality of pedagogues. The parts of speech are a boy's pillory. I was myself flogged fifteen times in one forenoon over the conjugation of a verb. Punish if you will, but be kind too, and let the sugar-plum go with the rod.' This is not the language of a demagogue or a fanatic; it is the wise thought of a tender, human-hearted man.

At seventeen, he left school for the University at Erfurt. It was then no shame for a poor scholar to maintain himself by alms. Young Martin had a rich noble voice and a fine ear, and by singing ballads in the streets he found ready friends and help. He was still uncertain with what calling he should take up, when it happened that a young friend was killed at his side by lightning.

Erasmus was a philosopher. A powder magazine was once blown up by lightning in a town where Erasmus was staying, and a house of infamous character was destroyed. The inhabitants saw in what had hap-

pened the Divine anger against sin. Erasmus told them that if there was any anger in the matter, it was anger merely with the folly which had stored powder in an exposed situation.

Luther possessed no such premature intelligence. He was distinguished from other boys only by the greater power of his feelings and the vividness of his imagination. He saw in his friend's death the immediate hand of the great Lord of the universe. His conscience was terrified. A life-long penitence seemed necessary to atone for the faults of his boyhood. He too, like Erasmus, became a monk, not forced into it—for his father knew better what the holy men were like, and had no wish to have son of his among them —but because the monk of Martin's imagination spent his nights and days upon the stones in prayer; and Martin, in the heat of his repentance, longed to be kneeling at his side.

In this mood he entered the Augustine monastery at Erfurt. He was full of an overwhelming sense of his own wretchedness and sinfulness. Like St Paul, he was crying to be delivered from the body of death which he carried about him. He practised all possible austerities. He, if no one else, mortified his flesh with fasting. He passed nights in the chancel before the altar, or on his knees on the floor of his cell. He weakened his body till his mind wandered, and he saw ghosts and devils. Above all, he saw the flaming image of his own supposed guilt. God required that he should keep the law in all points. He had not so

kept the law—could not so keep the law—and therefore he believed that he was damned. One morning, he was found senseless and seemingly dead; a brother played to him on a flute, and soothed his senses back to consciousness.

It was long since any such phenomenon had appeared among the rosy friars of Erfurt. They could not tell what to make of him. Staupitz, the prior, listened to his accusations of himself in confession. 'My good fellow,' he said, 'don't be so uneasy; you have committed no sins of the least consequence; you have not killed anybody, or committed adultery, or things of that sort. If you sin to some purpose, it is right that you should be uneasy about it, but don't make mountains out of trifles.'

Very curious: to the commonplace man the uncommonplace is for ever unintelligible. What was the good of all that excitement—that agony of self-reproach for little things? None at all, if the object is only to be an ordinary good sort of man—if a decent fulfilment of the round of common duties is the be-all and the end-all of human life on earth.

The plague came by-and-by into the town. The commonplace clergy ran away—went to their country-houses, went to the hills, went anywhere—and they wondered in the same way why Luther would not go with them. They admired him and liked him. They told him his life was too precious to be thrown away. He answered, quite simply, that his place was with the sick and dying. A monk's life was no great matter

The sun he did not doubt would continue to shine, whatever became of him. 'I am no St Paul,' he said; 'I am afraid of death; but there are things worse than death, and if I die, I die.'

Even a Staupitz could not but feel that he had an extraordinary youth in his charge. To divert his mind from feeding upon itself, he devised a mission for him abroad, and brother Martin was despatched on business of the convent to Rome.

Luther too, like Erasmus, was to see Rome; but how different the figures of the two men there! Erasmus goes with servants and horses, the polished, successful man of the world. Martin Luther trudges penniless and barefoot across the Alps, helped to a meal and a night's rest at the monasteries along the road, or begging, if the convents fail him, at the farmhouses.

He was still young, and too much occupied with his own sins to know much of the world outside him. Erasmus had no dreams. He knew the hard truth on most things. But Rome, to Luther's eager hopes, was the city of the saints, and the court and palace of the Pope fragrant with the odours of Paradise. 'Blessed Rome,' he cried, as he entered the gate—'Blessed Rome, sanctified with the blood of martyrs!'

Alas! the Rome of reality was very far from blessed. He remained long enough to complete his disenchantment. The cardinals, with their gilded chariots and their parasols of peacocks' plumes, were poor representatives of the apostles. The gorgeous churches and

more gorgeous rituals, the pagan splendour of the paintings, the heathen gods still almost worshipped in the adoration of the art which had formed them, to Luther, whose heart was heavy with thoughts of man's depravity, were utterly horrible. The name of religion was there: the thinnest veil was scarcely spread over the utter disbelief with which God and Christ were at heart regarded. Culture enough there was. It was the Rome of Raphael and Michael Angelo, of Perugino, and Benvenuto; but to the poor German monk, who had come there to find help for his suffering soul, what was culture?

He fled at the first moment that he could. 'Adieu! Rome,' he said; 'let all who would lead a holy life depart from Rome. Everything is permitted in Rome except to be an honest man.' He had no thought of leaving the Roman Church. To a poor monk like him to talk of leaving the Church was like talking of leaping off the planet. But perplexed and troubled he returned to Saxony; and his friend Staupitz, seeing clearly that a monastery was no place for him, recommended him to the Elector as Professor of Philosophy at Wittenberg.

The senate of Wittenberg gave him the pulpit of the town church, and there at once he had room to show what was in him. 'This monk,' said some one who heard him, 'is a marvellous fellow. He has strange eyes, and will give the doctors trouble by-and-by.'

He had read deeply, especially he had read that rare and almost unknown book, the 'New Testament.'

He was not cultivated like Erasmus. Erasmus spoke the most polished Latin. Luther spoke and wrote his own vernacular German. The latitudinarian philosophy, the analytical acuteness, the sceptical toleration of Erasmus were alike strange and distasteful to him. In all things he longed only to know the truth—to shake off and hurl from him lies and humbug.

Superstitious he was. He believed in witches and devils and fairies—a thousand things without basis in fact, which Erasmus passed by in contemptuous indifference. But for things which were really true—true as nothing else in this world, or any world, is true—the justice of God, the infinite excellence of good, the infinite hatefulness of evil—these things he believed and felt with a power of passionate conviction to which the broader, feebler mind of the other was for ever a stranger.

We come now to the memorable year 1517, when Luther was thirty-five years old. A new cathedral was in progress at Rome. Michael Angelo had furnished Leo the Tenth with the design of St Peter's; and the question of questions was to find money to complete the grandest structure which had ever been erected by man.

Pope Leo was the most polished and cultivated of mankind. The work to be done was to be the most splendid which art could produce. The means to which the Pope had recourse will serve to show us how much all that would have done for us.

You remember what I told you about indulgences.

The notable device of his Holiness was to send distinguished persons about Europe with sacks of indulgences. Indulgences and dispensations! Dispensations to eat meat on fast-days—dispensations to marry one's near relation—dispensations for anything and everything which the faithful might wish to purchase who desired forbidden pleasures. The dispensations were simply scandalous. The indulgences—well, if a pious Catholic is asked now-a-days what they were, he will say that they were the remission of the penances which the Church inflicts upon earth; but it is also certain that they would have sold cheap if the people had thought that this was all that they were to get by them. As the thing was represented by the spiritual hawkers who disposed of these wares, they were letters of credit on heaven. When the great book was opened, the people believed that these papers would be found entered on the right side of the account. Debtor—so many murders, so many robberies, lies, slanders, or debaucheries. Creditor—the merits of the saints placed to the account of the delinquent by the Pope's letters in consideration of value received.

This is the way in which the pardon system was practically worked. This is the way in which it is worked still, where the same superstitions remain.

If one had asked Pope Leo whether he really believed in these pardons of his, he would have said officially that the Church had always held that the Pope had power to grant them.

Had he told the truth, he would have added pri-

vately that if the people chose to be fools, it was not for him to disappoint them.

The collection went on. The money of the faithful came in plentifully; and the pedlars going their rounds appeared at last in Saxony.

The Pope had bought the support of the Archbishop of Mayence, Erasmus's friend, by promising him half the spoil which was gathered in his province. The agent was the Dominican monk Tetzel, whose name has acquired a forlorn notoriety in European history.

His stores were opened in town after town. He entered in state. The streets everywhere were hung with flags. Bells were pealed; nuns and monks walked in procession before and after him, while he himself sat in a chariot, with the Papal Bull on a velvet cushion in front of him. The sale-rooms were the churches. The altars were decorated, the candles lighted, the arms of St Peter blazoned conspicuously on the roof. Tetzel from the pulpit explained the efficacy of his medicines; and if any profane person doubted their power, he was threatened with excommunication.

Acolytes walked through the crowds, clinking their plates and crying, 'Buy! buy!' The business went as merry as a marriage bell till the Dominican came near to Wittenberg.

Half a century before such a spectacle would have excited no particular attention. The few who saw through the imposition would have kept their thoughts to themselves: the many would have paid their

money, and in a month all would have been forgotten.

But the fight between the men of letters and the monks, the writings of Erasmus and Reuchlin, the satires of Ulric von Hutten, had created a silent revolution in the minds of the younger laity.

A generation had grown to manhood of whom the Church authorities knew nothing; and the whole air of Germany, unsuspected by pope or prelate, was charged with electricity.

Had Luther stood alone, he, too, would probably have remained silent. What was he, a poor, friendless, solitary monk, that he should set himself against the majesty of the triple crown?

However hateful the walls of a dungeon, a man of sense confined alone there does not dash his hands against the stones.

But Luther knew that his thoughts were the thoughts of thousands. Many wrong things, as we all know, have to be endured in this world. Authority is never very angelic; and moderate injustice, and a moderate quantity of lies, are more tolerable than anarchy.

But it is with human things as it is with the great icebergs which drift southward out of the frozen seas. They swim two-thirds under water, and one-third above; and so long as the equilibrium is sustained, you would think that they were as stable as the rocks. But the sea-water is warmer than the air. Hundreds of fathoms down, the tepid current washes the base of the berg. Silently in those far deeps the centre of

gravity is changed; and then, in a moment, with one vast roll, the enormous mass heaves over, and the crystal peaks which had been glancing so proudly in the sunlight, are buried in the ocean for ever.

Such a process as this had been going on in Germany, and Luther knew it, and knew that the time was come for him to speak. Fear had not kept him back. The danger to himself would be none the less because he would have the people at his side. The fiercer the thunderstorm, the greater peril to the central figure who stands out above the rest exposed to it. But he saw that there was hope at last of a change; and for himself—as he said in the plague—if he died, he died.

Erasmus admitted frankly for himself that he did not like danger.

'As to me,' he wrote to Archbishop Warham, 'I have no inclination to risk my life for truth. We have not all strength for martyrdom; and if trouble come, I shall imitate St Peter. Popes and emperors must settle the creeds. If they settle them well, so much the better; if ill, I shall keep on the safe side.'

That is to say, truth was not the first necessity to Erasmus. He would prefer truth, if he could have it. If not, he could get on moderately well upon falsehood. Luther could not. No matter what the danger to himself, if he could smite a lie upon the head and kill it, he was better pleased than by a thousand lives. We hear much of Luther's doctrine about faith. Stripped of theological verbiage, that doctrine means this.

Reason says that, on the whole, truth and justice

are desirable things. They make men happier in themselves, and make society more prosperous. But there reason ends, and men will not die for principles of utility. Faith says that between truth and lies there is an infinite difference: one is of God, the other of Satan; one is eternally to be loved, the other eternally to be abhorred. It cannot say why, in language intelligible to reason. It is the voice of the nobler nature in man speaking out of his heart.

While Tetzel, with his bull and his gilt car, was coming to Wittenberg, Luther, loyal still to authority while there was a hope that authority would be on the side of right, wrote to the Archbishop of Mayence to remonstrate.

The Archbishop, as we know, was to have a share of Tetzel's spoils; and what were the complaints of a poor insignificant monk to a supreme archbishop who was in debt and wanted money?

The Archbishop of Mayence flung the letter into his waste-paper basket; and Luther made his solemn appeal from earthly dignitaries to the conscience of the German people. He set up his protest on the church door at Wittenberg; and, in ninety-five propositions he challenged the Catholic Church to defend Tetzel and his works.

The Pope's indulgences, he said, cannot take away sins. God alone remits sins; and He pardons those who are penitent, without help from man's absolutions.

The Church may remit penalties which the Church

inflicts. But the Church's power is in this world only, and does not reach to purgatory.

If God has thought fit to place a man in purgatory, who shall say that it is good for him to be taken out of purgatory? who shall say that he himself desires it?

True repentance does not shrink from chastisement. True repentance rather loves chastisement.

The bishops are asleep. It is better to give to the poor than to buy indulgences; and he who sees his neighbour in want, and instead of helping his neighbour buys a pardon for himself, is doing what is displeasing to God. Who is this man who dares to say that for so many crowns the soul of a sinner can be made whole.

These, and like these, were Luther's propositions. Little guessed the Catholic prelates the dimensions of the act which had been done. The Pope, when he saw the theses, smiled in good-natured contempt. 'A drunken German wrote them,' he said; 'when he has slept off his wine, he will be of another mind.'

Tetzel bayed defiance; the Dominican friars took up the quarrel; and Hochstrat of Cologne, Reuchlin's enemy, clamoured for fire and faggot.

Voice answered voice. The religious houses all Germany over were like kennels of hounds howling to each other across the spiritual waste. If souls could not be sung out of purgatory, their occupation was gone.

Luther wrote to Pope Leo to defend himself; Leo

cited him to answer for his audacity at Rome; while to the young laymen, to the noble spirits all Europe over, Wittenberg became a beacon of light shining in the universal darkness.

It was a trying time to Luther. Had he been a smaller man, he would have been swept away by his sudden popularity—he would have placed himself at the head of some great democratic movement, and in a few years his name would have disappeared in the noise and smoke of anarchy.

But this was not his nature. His fellow-townsmen were heartily on his side. He remained quietly at his post in the Augustine Church at Wittenberg. If the powers of the world came down upon him and killed him, he was ready to be killed. Of himself at all times he thought infinitely little; and he believed that his death would be as serviceable to truth as his life.

Killed undoubtedly he would have been if the clergy could have had their way. It happened, however, that Saxony just then was governed by a prince of no common order. Were all princes like the Elector Frederick, we should have no need of democracy in this world—we should never have heard of democracy. The clergy could not touch Luther against the will of the Wittenberg senate, unless the Elector would help them; and, to the astonishment of everybody, the Elector was disinclined to consent. The Pope himself wrote to exhort him to his duties. The Elector still hesitated. His professed creed was the creed in which

the Church had educated him; but he had a clear secular understanding outside his formulas. When he read the propositions, they did not seem to him the pernicious things which the monks said they were. 'There is much in the Bible about Christ,' he said, 'but not much about Rome.' He sent for Erasmus and asked him what he thought about the matter.

The Elector knew to whom he was speaking. He wished for a direct answer, and looked Erasmus full and broad in the face. Erasmus pinched his thin lips together. 'Luther,' he said at length, 'has committed two sins: he has touched the Pope's crown and the monks' bellies.'

He generously and strongly urged Frederick not to yield for the present to Pope Leo's importunacy; and the Pope was obliged to try less hasty and more formal methods.

He had wished Luther to be sent to him to Rome, where his process would have had a rapid end. As this could not be, the case was transferred to Augsburg, and a cardinal legate was sent from Italy to look into it.

There was no danger of violence at Augsburg. The towns-people there and everywhere were on the side of freedom; and Luther went cheerfully to defend himself. He walked from Wittenberg. You can fancy him still in his monk's brown frock, with all his wardrobe on his back—an apostle of the old sort. The citizens, high and low, attended him to the gates, and followed him along the road, crying 'Luther for ever!' 'Nay,' he answered, 'Christ for ever!'

The cardinal legate, being reduced to the necessity of politeness, received him civilly. He told him, however, simply and briefly, that the Pope insisted on his recantation, and would accept nothing else. Luther requested the cardinal to point out to him where he was wrong. The cardinal waived discussion. 'He was come to command,' he said, 'not to argue.' And Luther had to tell him that it could not be.

Remonstrances, threats, entreaties, even bribes were tried. Hopes of high distinction and reward were held out to him if he would only be reasonable. To the amazement of the proud Italian, a poor peasant's son—a miserable friar of a provincial German town—was prepared to defy the power and resist the prayers of the Sovereign of Christendom. 'What!' said the cardinal at last to him, 'do you think the Pope cares for the opinion of a German boor? The Pope's little finger is stronger than all Germany. Do you expect your princes to take up arms to defend *you—you*, a wretched worm like you? I tell you, No! and where will you be then—where will you be then?'

Luther answered, 'Then, as now, in the hands of Almighty God.'

The court dissolved. The cardinal carried back his report to his master. The Pope, so defied, brought out his thunders; he excommunicated Luther; he wrote again to the Elector, entreating him not to soil his name and lineage by becoming a protector of heretics; and he required him, without further ceremony, to render up the criminal to justice.

The Elector's power was limited. As yet, the quarrel was simply between Luther and the Pope. The Elector was by no means sure that his bold subject was right—he was only not satisfied that he was wrong—and it was a serious question with him how far he ought to go. The monk might next be placed under the ban of the empire; and if he persisted in protecting him afterwards, Saxony might have all the power of Germany upon it. He did not venture any more to refuse absolutely. He temporized and delayed; while Luther himself, probably at the Elector's instigation, made overtures for peace to the Pope. Saving his duty to Christ, he promised to be for the future an obedient son of the Church, and to say no more about indulgences if Tetzel ceased to defend them.

'My being such a small creature,' Luther said afterwards, 'was a misfortune for the Pope. He despised me too much! What, he thought, could a slave like me do to him—to him, who was the greatest man in all the world? Had he accepted my proposal, he would have extinguished me.'

But the infallible Pope conducted himself like a proud, irascible, exceedingly fallible mortal. To make terms with the town preacher of Wittenberg was too preposterous.

Just then the imperial throne fell vacant; and the pretty scandal I told you of, followed at the choice of his successor. Frederick of Saxony might have been elected if he had liked—and it would have been better for the world perhaps if Frederick had been more

ambitious of high dignities—but the Saxon Prince did not care to trouble himself with the imperial sceptre. The election fell on Maximilian's grandson Charles—grandson also of Ferdinand the Catholic—Sovereign of Spain; Sovereign of Burgundy and the Low Countries; Sovereign of Naples and Sicily; Sovereign beyond the Atlantic, of the New Empire of the Indies.

No fitter man could have been found to do the business of the Pope. With the empire of Germany added to his inherited dominions, who could resist him?

To the new Emperor, unless the Elector yielded, Luther's case had now to be referred.

The Elector, if he had wished, could not interfere. Germany was attentive, but motionless. The students, the artisans, the tradesmen, were at heart with the Reformer; and their enthusiasm could not be wholly repressed. The press grew fertile with pamphlets; and it was noticed that all the printers and compositors went for Luther. The Catholics could not get their books into type without sending them to France or the Low Countries.

Yet none of the princes except the Elector had as yet shown him favour. The bishops were hostile to a man. The nobles had given no sign; and their place would be naturally on the side of authority. They had no love for bishops—there was hope in that; and they looked with no favour on the huge estates of the religious orders. But no one could expect that they would peril their lands and lives for an insignificant monk.

There was an interval of two years before the Emperor was at leisure to take up the question. The time was spent in angry altercation, boding no good for the future.

The Pope issued a second bull condemning Luther and his works. Luther replied by burning the bull in the great square at Wittenberg.

At length, in April 1521, the Diet of the Empire assembled at Worms, and Luther was called to defend himself in the presence of Charles the Fifth.

That it should have come to this at all, in days of such high-handed authority, was sufficiently remarkable. It indicated something growing in the minds of men, that the so-called Church was not to carry things any longer in the old style. Popes and bishops might order, but the laity intended for the future to have opinions of their own how far such orders should be obeyed.

The Pope expected anyhow that the Diet, by fair means or foul, would now rid him of his adversary. The Elector, who knew the ecclesiastical ways of handling such matters, made it a condition of his subject appearing, that he should have a safe-conduct, under the Emperor's hand; that Luther, if judgment went against him, should be free for the time to return to the place from which he had come; and that he, the Elector, should determine afterwards what should be done with him.

When the interests of the Church were concerned, safe-conducts, it was too well known, were poor security.

Pope Clement the Seventh, a little after, when reproached for breaking a promise, replied with a smile, 'The Pope has power to bind and to loose.' Good, in the eyes of ecclesiastical authorities, meant what was good for the Church; evil, whatever was bad for the Church; and the highest moral obligation became sin when it stood in St Peter's way.

There had been an outburst of free thought in Bohemia a century and a half before. John Huss, Luther's forerunner, came with a safe-conduct to the Council of Constance; but the bishops ruled that safe-conducts could not protect heretics. They burnt John Huss for all their promises, and they hoped now that so good a Catholic as Charles would follow so excellent a precedent. Pope Leo wrote himself to beg that Luther's safe-conduct should not be observed. The bishops and archbishops, when Charles consulted them, took the same view as the Pope.

'There is something in the office of a bishop,' Luther said, a year or two later, 'which is dreadfully demoralizing. Even good men change their natures at their consecration; Satan enters into them as he entered into Judas, as soon as they have taken the sop.'

It was most seriously likely that, if Luther trusted himself at the Diet on the faith of his safe-conduct, he would never return alive. Rumours of intended treachery were so strong, that if he refused to go, the Elector meant to stand by him at any cost. Should he appear, or not appear? It was for himself to decide. If he stayed away, judgment would go against him by de-

fault. Charles would call out the forces of the empire, and Saxony would be invaded.

Civil war would follow, with insurrection all over Germany, with no certain prospect except bloodshed and misery.

Luther was not a man to expose his country to peril that his own person might escape. He had provoked the storm; and if blood was to be shed, his blood ought at least to be the first. He went. On his way, a friend came to warn him again that foul play was intended, that he was condemned already, that his books had been burnt by the hangman, and that he was a dead man if he proceeded.

Luther trembled—he owned it—but he answered, 'Go to Worms! I will go if there are as many devils in Worms as there are tiles upon the roofs of the houses.'

The roofs, when he came into the city, were crowded, not with devils, but with the inhabitants, all collecting there to see him as he passed. A nobleman gave him shelter for the night; the next day he was led to the Town Hall.

No more notable spectacle had been witnessed in this planet for many a century—not, perhaps, since a greater than Luther stood before the Roman Procurator.

There on the raised dais sat the sovereign of half the world. There on either side of him stood the archbishops, the ministers of state, the princes of the empire, gathered together to hear and judge the son of a poor miner, who had made the world ring with his name.

The body of the hall was thronged with knights and nobles—stern hard men in dull gleaming armour. Luther, in his brown frock, was led forward between their ranks. The looks which greeted him were not all unfriendly. The first Article of a German credo was belief in *courage*. Germany had had its feuds in times past with Popes of Rome, and they were not without pride that a poor countryman of theirs should have taken by the beard the great Italian priest. They had settled among themselves that, come what would, there should be fair play; and they looked on half admiring, and half in scorn.

As Luther passed up the hall, a steel baron touched him on the shoulder with his gauntlet.

'Pluck up thy spirit, little monk,' he said; 'some of us here have seen warm work in our time, but, by my troth, nor I nor any knight in this company ever needed a stout heart more than thou needest it now. If thou hast faith in these doctrines of thine, little monk, go on, in the name of God.'

'Yes, in the name of God,' said Luther, throwing back his head, 'In the name of God, forward!'

As at Augsburg, one only question was raised. Luther had broken the laws of the Church. He had taught doctrines which the Pope had declared to be false. Would he or would he not retract?

As at Augsburg, he replied briefly that he would retract when his doctrines were not declared to be false merely, but were proved to be false. Then, but not till then. That was his answer, and his last word

There, as you understand, the heart of the matter indeed rested. In those words lay the whole meaning of the Reformation. Were men to go on for ever saying that this and that was true, because the Pope affirmed it? Or were Pope's decrees thenceforward to be tried like the words of other men—by the ordinary laws of evidence?

It required no great intellect to understand that a Pope's pardon, which you could buy for five shillings, could not really get a soul out of purgatory. It required a quality much rarer than intellect to look such a doctrine in the face—sanctioned as it was by the credulity of ages, and backed by the pomp and pageantry of earthly power—and say to it openly, 'You are a lie.' Cleverness and culture could have given a thousand reasons—they did then and they do now—why an indulgence should be believed in; when honesty and common sense could give but one reason for thinking otherwise. Cleverness and imposture get on excellently well together—imposture and veracity, never.

Luther looked at those wares of Tetzel's, and said, 'Your pardons are no pardons at all—no letters of credit on heaven, but flash notes of the Bank of Humbug; and you know it.' They did know it. The conscience of every man in Europe answered back, that what Luther said was true.

Bravery, honesty, veracity, these were the qualities which were needed—which were needed then, and are needed always, as the root of all real greatness in man.

The first missionaries of Christianity, when they

came among the heathen nations, and found them worshipping idols, did not care much to reason that an image which man had made could not be God. The priests might have been a match for them in reasoning. They walked up to the idol in the presence of its votaries. They threw stones at it, spat upon it, insulted it. 'See,' they said, 'I do this to your God. If he is God, let him avenge himself.'

It was a simple argument; always effective; easy, and yet most difficult. It required merely a readiness to be killed upon the spot by the superstition which it outraged.

And so, and only so, can truth make its way for us in any such matters. The form changes—the thing remains. Superstition, folly, and cunning will go on to the end of time, spinning their poison webs around the consciences of mankind. Courage and veracity—these qualities, and only these, avail to defeat them.

From the moment that Luther left the Emperor's presence a free man, the spell of Absolutism was broken, and the victory of the Reformation secured. The ban of the Pope had fallen; the secular arm had been called to interfere; the machinery of authority strained as far as it would bear. The Emperor himself was an unconscious convert to the higher creed. The Pope had urged him to break his word. The Pope had told him that honour was nothing, and morality was nothing, where the interests of orthodoxy were compromised. The Emperor had refused to be tempted into perjury; and, in refusing, had admitted that there was a spiritual

power upon the earth, above the Pope, and above him.

The party of the Church felt it so. A plot was formed to assassinate Luther on his return to Saxony. The insulted majesty of Rome could be vindicated at least by the dagger.

But this, too, failed. The Elector heard what was intended. A party of horse, disguised as banditti, waylaid the Reformer upon the road, and carried him off to the castle of Wartburg, where he remained out of harm's way till the general rising of Germany placed him beyond the reach of danger.

At Wartburg for the present evening we leave him.

The Emperor Charles and Luther never met again. The monks of Yuste, who watched on the death-bed of Charles, reported that at the last hour he repented that he had kept his word, and reproached himself for having allowed the arch-heretic to escape from his hands.

It is possible that, when the candle of life was burning low, and spirit and flesh were failing together, and the air of the sick room was thick and close with the presence of the angel of death, the nobler nature of the Emperor might have yielded to the influences which were around him. His confessor might have thrust into his lips the words which he so wished to hear.

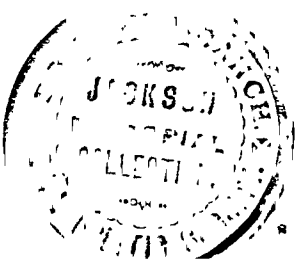
But Charles the Fifth, though a Catholic always, was a Catholic of the old grand type, to whom creed and dogmas were but the robe of a regal humanity. Another story is told of Charles—an authentic story

this one—which makes me think that the monks of Yuste mistook or maligned him. Six and twenty years after this scene at Worms, when the then dawning heresy had become broad day; when Luther had gone to his rest—and there had gathered about his name the hate which mean men feel for an enemy who has proved too strong for them—a passing vicissitude in the struggle brought the Emperor at the head of his army to Wittenberg.

The vengeance which the monks could not inflict upon him in life, they proposed to wreak upon his bones.

The Emperor desired to be conducted to Luther's tomb; and as he stood gazing at it, full of many thoughts, some one suggested that the body should be taken up and burnt at the stake in the Market-place.

There was nothing unusual in the proposal; it was the common practice of the Catholic Church with the remains of heretics, who were held unworthy to be left in repose in hallowed ground. There was scarcely, perhaps, another Catholic prince who would have hesitated to comply. But Charles was one of nature's gentlemen; he answered, 'I war not with the dead.'



III.

We have now entered upon the movement which broke the power of the Papacy—which swept Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, England, Scotland, into the stream of revolution, and gave a new direction to the spiritual history of mankind.

You would not thank me if I were to take you out into that troubled ocean. I confine myself, and I wish you to confine your attention, to the two kinds of men who appear as leaders in times of change—of whom Erasmus and Luther are respectively the types.

On one side there are the large-minded latitudinarian philosophers—men who have no confidence in the people—who have no passionate convictions; moderate men, tolerant men, who trust to education, to general progress in knowledge and civilization, to forbearance, to endurance, to time—men who believe that all wholesome reforms proceed downwards from the educated to the multitudes; who regard with contempt, qualified by terror, appeals to the popular conscience or to popular intelligence.

Opposite to these are the men of faith—and by faith I do not mean belief in dogmas, but belief in goodness, belief in justice, in righteousness, above all, belief in truth. Men of faith consider conscience of more importance than knowledge—or rather as a first condition

—without which all the knowledge in the world is no use to a man—if he wishes to be indeed a man in any high and noble sense of the word. They are not contented with looking for what may be useful or pleasant to themselves; they look by quite other methods for what is honourable—for what is good—for what is just. They believe that if they can find out that, then at all hazards, and in spite of all present consequences to themselves, that is to be preferred. If, individually and to themselves, no visible good ever came from it, in this world or in any other, still they would say, 'Let us do that and nothing else. Life will be of no value to us if we are to use it only for our own gratification.'

The soldier before a battle knows that if he shirks and pretends to be ill, he may escape danger and make sure of his life. There are very few men, indeed, if it comes to that, who would not sooner die ten times over than so dishonour themselves. Men of high moral nature carry out the same principle into the details of their daily life; they do not care to live unless they may live nobly. Like my uncle Toby, they have but one fear—the fear of doing a wrong thing.

I call this faith, because there is no proof, such as will satisfy the scientific inquirer, that there is any such thing as moral truth—any such thing as absolute right and wrong at all. As the Scripture says, 'Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself.' The forces of nature pay no respect to what we call good and evil. Prosperity does not uniformly follow virtue; nor are defeat and failure necessary consequences of vice.

Certain virtues—temperance, industry, and things within reasonable limits — command their reward. Sensuality, idleness, and waste, commonly lead to ruin.

But prosperity is consistent with intense worldliness, intense selfishness, intense hardness of heart; while the grander features of human character — self-sacrifice, disregard of pleasure, patriotism, love of knowledge, devotion to any great and good cause—these have no tendency to bring men what is called fortune. They do not even necessarily promote their happiness; for do what they will in this way, the horizon of what they desire to do perpetually flies before them. High hopes and enthusiasms are generally disappointed in results; and the wrongs, the cruelties, the wretchednesses of all kinds which for ever prevail among mankind—the shortcomings in himself of which he becomes more conscious as he becomes really better—these things, you may be sure, will prevent a noble-minded man from ever being particularly happy.

If you see a man happy, as the world goes—contented with himself and contented with what is round him—such a man may be, and probably is, decent and respectable; but the highest is not in him, and the highest will not come out of him.

Judging merely by outward phenomena—judging merely by what we call reason—you cannot prove that there is any moral government in the world at all, except what men, for their own convenience, introduce into it. Right and wrong resolve themselves into principles of utility and social convenience. En-

lightened selfishness prescribes a decent rule of conduct for common purposes; and virtue, by a large school of philosophy, is completely resolved into that.

True, when nations go on long on the selfish hypothesis, they are apt to find at last that they have been mistaken. They find it in bankruptcy of honour and character—in social wreck and dissolution. All lies in serious matters end at last, as Carlyle says, in broken heads. That is the final issue which they are sure to come to in the long run. The Maker of the world does not permit a society to continue which forgets or denies the nobler principles of action.

But the end is often long in coming; and these nobler principles are meanwhile *not* provided for us by the inductive philosophy.

Patriotism, for instance, of which we used to think something—a readiness to devote our energies while we live, to devote our lives, if nothing else will serve, to what we call our country—what are we to say of that?

I once asked a distinguished philosopher what he thought of patriotism. He said he thought it was a compound of vanity and superstition; a bad kind of prejudice, which would die out with the growth of reason. My friend believed in the progress of humanity—he could not narrow his sympathies to so small a thing as his own country. I could but say to myself, 'Thank God, then, we are not yet a nation of philosophers.'

A man who takes up with philosophy like that, may write fine books, and review articles and such like, but

at the bottom of him he is a poor caitiff, and there is no more to be said about him.

So when the air is heavy with imposture, and men live only to make money, and the service of God is become a thing of words and ceremonies, and the kingdom of heaven is bought and sold, and all that is high and pure in man is smothered by corruption—fire of the same kind bursts out in higher natures with a fierceness which cannot be controlled; and, confident in truth and right, they call fearlessly on the seven thousand in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal to rise and stand by them.

They do not ask whether those whom they address have wide knowledge of history, or science, or philosophy; they ask rather that they shall be honest, that they shall be brave, that they shall be true to the common light which God has given to all His children. They know well that conscience is no exceptional privilege of the great or the cultivated, that to be generous and unselfish is no prerogative of rank or intellect.

Erasmus considered that, for the vulgar, a lie might be as good as truth, and often better. A lie, ascertained to be a lie, to Luther was deadly poison—poison to him, and poison to all who meddled with it. In his own genuine greatness, he was too humble to draw insolent distinctions in his own favour; or to believe that any one class on earth is of more importance than another in the eyes of the Great Maker of them all.

Well, then, you know what I mean by faith, and

what I mean by intellect. It was not that Luther was without intellect. He was less subtle, less learned, than Erasmus; but in mother wit, in elasticity, in force, and imaginative power, he was as able a man as ever lived. Luther created the German language as an instrument of literature. His translation of the Bible is as rich and grand as our own, and his table talk as full of matter as Shakespeare's plays.

Again; you will mistake me if you think I represent Erasmus as a man without conscience, or belief in God and goodness. But in Luther that belief was a certainty; in Erasmus it was only a high probability—and the difference between the two is not merely great, it is infinite. In Luther, it was the root; in Erasmus, it was the flower. In Luther, it was the first principle of life; in Erasmus, it was an inference which might be taken away, and yet leave the world a very tolerable and habitable place after all.

You see the contrast in their early lives. You see Erasmus—light, bright, sarcastic, fond of pleasure, fond of society, fond of wine and kisses, and intellectual talk and polished company. You see Luther throwing himself into the cloister, that he might subdue his will to the will of God; prostrate in prayer, in nights of agony, and distracting his easy-going confessor with the exaggerated scruples of his conscience.

You see it in the effects of their teaching. You see Erasmus addressing himself with persuasive eloquence to kings, and popes, and prelates; and for answer, you see Pope Leo sending Tetzel over Germany

with his carriage load of indulgences. You see Erasmus's dearest friend, our own gifted admirable Sir Thomas More, taking his seat beside the bishops and sending poor Protestant artisans to the stake.

You see Luther, on the other side, standing out before the world, one lone man, with all authority against him—taking lies by the throat, and Europe thrilling at his words, and saying after him, 'The reign of Imposture shall end.'

Let us follow the course of Erasmus after the tempest had broken.

He knew Luther to be right. Luther had but said what Erasmus had been all his life convinced of, and Luther looked to see him come forward and take his place at his side. Had Erasmus done so, the course of things would have been far happier and better. His prodigious reputation would have given the Reformers the influence with the educated which they had won for themselves with the multitude, and the Pope would have been left without a friend to the north of the Alps. But there would have been some danger—danger to the leaders, if certainty of triumph to the cause—and Erasmus had no gift for martyrdom.

His first impulse was generous. He encouraged the Elector, as we have seen, to protect Luther from the Pope. 'I looked on Luther,' he wrote to Duke George of Saxe, 'as a necessary evil in the corruption of the Church; a medicine, bitter and drastic, from which sounder health would follow.'

And again, more boldly: 'Luther has taken up the

cause of honesty and good sense against abominations which are no longer tolerable. His enemies are men under whose worthlessness the Christian world has groaned too long.'

So to the heads of the Church he wrote, pressing them to be moderate and careful :—

'I neither approve Luther nor condemn him,' he said to the Archbishop of Mayence; 'if he is innocent, he ought not to be oppressed by the factions of the wicked; if he is in error, he should be answered, not destroyed. The theologians'—observe how true they remain to the universal type in all times and in all countries—' the theologians do not try to answer him. They do but raise an insane and senseless clamour, and shriek and curse. Heresy, heretic, heresiarch, schismatic, Antichrist—these are the words which are in the mouths of all of them; and, of course, they condemn without reading. I warned them what they were doing. I told them to scream less, and to think more. Luther's life they admit to be innocent and blameless. Such a tragedy I never saw. The most humane men are thirsting for his blood, and they would rather kill him than mend him. The Dominicans are the worst, and are more knaves than fools. In old times, even a heretic was quietly listened to. If he recanted, he was absolved; if he persisted, he was at worst excommunicated. Now they will have nothing but blood. Not to agree with them is heresy. To know Greek is heresy. To speak good Latin is heresy. Whatever they do not understand is heresy. Learning, they pretend, has

given birth to Luther, though Luther has but little of it. Luther thinks more of the Gospel than of scholastic divinity, and that is his crime. This is plain at least, that the best men everywhere are those who are least offended with him.'

Even to Pope Leo, in the midst of his fury, Erasmus wrote bravely; separating himself from Luther, yet deprecating violence. 'Nothing,' he said, 'would so recommend the new teaching as the howling of fools:' while to a member of Charles's council he insisted that 'severity had been often tried in such cases and had always failed; unless Luther was encountered calmly and reasonably, a tremendous convulsion was inevitable.'

Wisely said all this, but it presumed that those whom he was addressing were reasonable men; and high officials, touched in their pride, are a class of persons of whom Solomon may have been thinking when he said, 'Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man rather than a fool in his folly.'

So to Luther, so to the people, Erasmus preached moderation. It was like preaching to the winds in a hurricane. The typhoon itself is not wilder than human creatures when once their passions are stirred. You cannot check them; but, if you are brave, you can guide them wisely. And this, Erasmus had not the heart to do.

He said at the beginning, 'I will not countenance revolt against authority. A bad government is better than none.' But he said at the same time, 'You

bishops, cease to be corrupt: you popes and cardinals, reform your wicked courts: you monks, leave your scandalous lives, and obey the rules of your order, so you may recover the respect of mankind, and be obeyed and loved as before.'

When he found that the case was desperate; that his exhortations were but words addressed to the winds; that corruption had tainted the blood; that there was no hope except in revolution—as, indeed, in his heart he knew from the first that there was none—then his place ought to have been with Luther.

But Erasmus, as the tempest rose, could but stand still in feeble uncertainty. The responsibilities of his reputation weighed him down.

The Lutherans said, 'You believe as we do.' The Catholics said, 'You are a Lutheran at heart; if you are not, prove it by attacking Luther.'

He grew impatient. He told lies. He said he had not read Luther's books, and had no time to read them. What was he, he said, that he should meddle in such a quarrel? He was the vine and the fig tree of the book of Judges. The trees said to them, Rule over us. The vine and the fig tree answered, they would not leave their sweetness for such a thankless office. 'I am a poor actor,' he said; 'I prefer to be a spectator of the display.'

But he was sore at heart, and bitter with disappointment. All had been going on so smoothly—literature was reviving, art and science were spreading, the mind of the world was being reformed in the best sense by

the classics of Greece and Rome, and now an apple of discord had been flung out into Europe.

The monks who had fought against enlightenment could point to the confusion as a fulfilment of their prophecies; and he, and all that he had done, was brought to disrepute.

To protect himself from the Dominicans, he was forced to pretend to an orthodoxy which he did not possess. Were all true which Luther had written, he pretended that it ought not to have been said, or should have been addressed in a learned language to the refined and educated.

He doubted whether it was not better on the whole to teach the people lies for their good, when truth was beyond their comprehension. Yet he could not for all that wish the Church to be successful.

'I fear for that miserable Luther,' he said; 'the popes and princes are furious with him. His own destruction would be no great matter, but if the monks triumph there will be no bearing them. They will never rest till they have rooted learning out of the land. The Pope expects *me* to write against Luther. The orthodox, it appears, can call him names—call him blockhead, fool, heretic, toadstool, schismatic, and Antichrist—but they must come to me to answer his arguments.'

'Oh! that this had never been,' he wrote to our own Archbishop Warham. 'Now there is no hope for any good. It is all over with quiet learning, thought, piety, and progress; violence is on one side and folly

on the other; and they accuse me of having caused it all. If I joined Luther I could only perish with him, and I do not mean to run my neck into a halter. Popes and emperors must decide matters. I will accept what is good, and do as I can with the rest. Peace on any terms is better than the justest war.'

Erasmus never stooped to real baseness. He was too clever, too genuine—he had too great a contempt for worldly greatness. They offered him a bishopric if he would attack Luther. He only laughed at them. What was a bishopric to him? He preferred a quiet life among his books at Louvaine.

But there was no more quiet for Erasmus at Louvaine or anywhere. Here is a scene between him and the Prior of the Dominicans in the presence of the Rector of the University.

The Dominican had preached at Erasmus in the University pulpit. Erasmus complained to the Rector, and the Rector invited the Dominican to defend himself. Erasmus tells the story.

'I sat on one side and the monk on the other, the Rector between us to prevent our scratching.

'The monk asked what the matter was, and said he had done no harm.

'I said he had told lies of me, and that was harm.

'It was after dinner. The holy man was flushed. He turned purple.

'"Why do you abuse monks in your books?" he said.

'"I spoke of your order," I answered. "I did not

mention you. You denounced me by name as a friend of Luther."

'He raged like a madman. "You are the cause of all this trouble," he said; "you are a chameleon, you can twist everything."

'"You see what a fellow he is," said I, turning to the Rector. "If it comes to calling names, why I can do that too; but let us be reasonable."

'He still roared and cursed; he vowed he would never rest till he had destroyed Luther.

'I said he might curse Luther till he burst himself if he pleased. I complained of his cursing me.

'He answered, that if I did not agree with Luther, I ought to say so, and write against him.

'"Why should I?" urged I. "The quarrel is none of mine. Why should I irritate Luther against me when he has horns and knows how to use them?"

'"Well, then," said he, "if you will not write, at least you can say that we Dominicans have had the best of the argument."

'"How can I do that?" replied I. "You have burnt his books, but I never heard that you had answered them."

'He almost spat upon me. I understand that there is to be a form of prayer for the conversion of Erasmus and Luther.'

But Erasmus was not to escape so easily. Adrian the Sixth, who succeeded Leo, was his old school-fellow, and implored his assistance in terms which made refusal impossible. Adrian wanted Erasmus to come to him

to Rome. He was too wary to walk into the wolf's den. But Adrian required him to write, and reluctantly he felt that he must comply.

What was he to say?

'If his Holiness will set about reform in good earnest,' he wrote to the Pope's secretary, 'and if he will not be too hard on Luther, I may, perhaps, do good; but what Luther writes of the tyranny, the corruption, the covetousness of the Roman court, would, my friend, that it was not true.'

To Adrian himself, Erasmus addressed a letter really remarkable.

'I cannot go to your Holiness,' he said, 'King Calculus will not let me. I have dreadful health, which this tornado has not improved. I, who was the favourite of everybody, am now cursed by everybody—at Louvaine by the monks; in Germany by the Lutherans. I have fallen into trouble in my old age, like a mouse into a pot of pitch. You say, Come to Rome; you might as well say to the crab, Fly. The crab says, Give me wings; I say, Give me back my health and my youth. If I write calmly against Luther I shall be called lukewarm; if I write as he does, I shall stir a hornets' nest. People think he can be put down by force. The more force you try, the stronger he will grow. Such disorders cannot be cured in that way. The Wickliffites in England were put down, but the fire smouldered.

'If you mean to use violence you have no need of me; but mark this—if monks and theologians think only of themselves, no good will come of it. Look

rather into the causes of all this confusion, and apply your remedies there. Send for the best and wisest men from all parts of Christendom and take their advice.'

Tell a crab to fly. Tell a pope to be reasonable. You must relieve him of his infallibility if you want him to act like a sensible man. Adrian could undertake no reforms, and still besought Erasmus to take arms for him.

Erasmus determined to gratify Adrian with least danger to himself and least injury to Luther.

'I remember Uzzah, and am afraid,' he said, in his quizzing way; 'it is not every one who is allowed to uphold the ark. Many a wise man has attacked Luther, and what has been effected? The Pope curses, the Emperor threatens; there are prisons, confiscations, faggots; and all is vain. What can a poor pigmy like me do?

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'The world has been besotted with ceremonies. Miserable monks have ruled all, entangling men's consciences for their own benefit. Dogma has been heaped on dogma. The bishops have been tyrants, the Pope's commissaries have been rascals. Luther has been an instrument of God's displeasure, like Pharaoh or Nebuchadnezzar, or the Cæsars, and I shall not attack him on such grounds as these.'

Erasmus was too acute to defend against Luther the weak points of a bad cause. He would not declare for him—but he would not go over to his enemies. Yet, unless he quarrelled with Adrian, he could not be abso-

lutely silent; so he chose a subject to write upon on which all schools of theology, Catholic or Protestant—all philosophers, all thinkers of whatever kind, have been divided from the beginning of time: fate and free will, predestination and the liberty of man—a problem which has no solution—which may be argued even from eternity to eternity.

The reason of the selection was obvious. Erasmus wished to please the Pope and not exasperate Luther Of course he pleased neither, and offended both.

Luther, who did not comprehend his motive, was needlessly angry. Adrian and the monks were openly contemptuous. Sick of them and their quarrels, he grew weary of the world, and began to wish to be well out of it.

It is characteristic of Erasmus that, like many highly-gifted men, but unlike all theologians, he expressed a hope for sudden death, and declared it to be one of the greatest blessings which a human creature can receive.

Do not suppose that he broke down or showed the white feather to fortune's buffets. Through all storms he stuck bravely to his own proper work; editing classics, editing the Fathers, writing paraphrases—still doing for Europe what no other man could have done.

The Dominicans hunted him away from Louvaine. There was no living for him in Germany for the Protestants. He suffered dreadfully from the stone, too, and in all ways had a cruel time of it. Yet he continued, for all that, to make life endurable.

He moved about in Switzerland and on the Upper Rhine. The lakes, the mountains, the waterfalls, the villas on the hill slopes, delighted Erasmus when few people else cared for such things. He was particular about his wine. The vintage of Burgundy was as new blood in his veins, and quickened his pen into brightness and life.

The German wines he liked worse—for this point among others, which is curious to observe in those days. The great capitalist winegrowers, anti-Reformers all of them, were people without conscience and humanity, and adulterated their liquors. Of course they did. They believed in nothing but money, and this was the way to make money.

'The water they mix with the wine,' Erasmus says, 'is the least part of the mischief. They put in lime, and alum, and resin, and sulphur, and salt—and then they say it is good enough for heretics.'

Observe the practical issue of religious corruption. Show me a people where trade is dishonest, and I will show you a people where religion is a sham.

'We hang men that steal money,' Erasmus exclaimed, writing doubtless with the remembrance of a stomach-ache. 'These wretches steal our money and our lives too, and get off scot free.'

He settled at last at Basle, which the storm had not yet reached, and tried to bury himself among his books. The shrieks of the conflict, however, still troubled his ears. He heard his own name still cursed, and he could not bear it or sit quiet under it.

His correspondence continued enormous. The high powers still appealed to him for advice and help: of open meddling he would have no more; he did not care, he said, to make a post of himself for every dog of a theologian to defile. Advice, however, he continued to give in the old style.

'Put down the preachers on both sides. Fill the pulpits with men who will kick controversy into the kennel, and preach piety and good manners. Teach nothing in the schools but what bears upon life and duty. Punish those who break the peace, and punish no one else; and wherever the new opinions have taken root, allow liberty of conscience.'

Perfection of wisdom; but a wisdom which, unfortunately, was three centuries at least out of date, which even now we have not grown big enough to profit by. The Catholic princes and bishops were at work with fire and faggot. The Protestants were pulling down monasteries, and turning the monks and nuns out into the world. The Catholics declared that Erasmus was as much to blame as Luther. The Protestants held him responsible for the persecutions, and insisted, not without reason, that if Erasmus had been true to his conscience, the whole Catholic Church must have accepted the Reformation.

He suffered bitterly under these attacks upon him. He loved quiet—and his ears were deafened with clamour. He liked popularity—and he was the best abused person in Europe. Others who suffered in the same way he could advise to leave the black-coated

jackdaws to their noise—but he could not follow his own counsel. When the curs were at his heels, he could not restrain himself from lashing out at them; and, from his retreat at Basle, his sarcasms flashed out like jagged points of lightning.

Describing an emeute, and the burning of an image of a saint, 'They insulted the poor image so,' he said, 'it is a marvel there was no miracle. The saint worked so many in the good old times.'

When Luther married an escaped nun, the Catholics exclaimed that Antichrist would be born from such an incestuous intercourse. 'Nay,' Erasmus said, 'if monk and nun produce Antichrist, there must have been legions of Antichrists these many years.'

More than once he was tempted to go over openly to Luther—not from a noble motive, but, as he confessed, 'to make those furies feel the difference between him and them.'

He was past sixty, with broken health and failing strength. He thought of going back to England, but England had by this time caught fire, and Basle had caught fire. There was no peace on earth.

'The horse has his heels,' he said, when advised to be quiet, 'the dog his teeth, the hedgehog his spines, the bee his sting. I myself have my tongue and my pen, and why should I not use them?'

Yet to use them to any purpose now, he must take a side, and, sorely tempted as he was, he could not.

With the negative part of the Protestant creed he sympathized heartily; but he did not understand

Luther's doctrine of faith, because he had none of his own, and he disliked it as a new dogma.

He regarded Luther's movement as an outburst of commonplace revolution, caused by the folly and wickedness of the authorities, but with no organizing vitality in itself; and his chief distress, as we gather from his later letters, was at his own treatment. He had done his best for both sides. He had failed, and was abused by everybody.

Thus passed away the last years of one of the most gifted men that Europe has ever seen. I have quoted many of his letters. I will add one more passage, written near the end of his life, very touching and pathetic :—

'Hercules,' he said, 'could not fight two monsters at once; while I, poor wretch, have lions, cerberuses, cancers, scorpions every day at my sword's point; not to mention smaller vermin—rats, mosquitoes, bugs, and fleas. My troops of friends are turned to enemies. At dinner-tables or social gatherings in churches and kings' courts, in public carriage or public flyboat, scandal pursues me, and calumny defiles my name. Every goose now hisses at Erasmus; and it is worse than being stoned, once for all, like Stephen, or shot with arrows like Sebastian.

'They attack me now even for my Latin style, and spatter me with epigrams. Fame I would have parted with; but to be the sport of blackguards—to be pelted with potsherds and dirt and ordure—is not this worse than death?

'There is no rest for me in my age, unless I join Luther; and I cannot, for I cannot accept his doctrines. Sometimes I am stung with a desire to avenge my wrongs; but I say to myself, "Will you, to gratify your spleen, raise your hand against your mother the Church, who begot you at the font and fed you with the word of God?" I cannot do it. Yet I understand now how Arius, and Tertullian, and Wickliff were driven into schism. The theologians say I am their enemy. Why? Because I bade monks remember their vows; because I told parsons to leave their wranglings and read the Bible; because I told popes and cardinals to look at the Apostles, and make themselves more like to them. If this is to be their enemy, then indeed I have injured them.'

This was almost the last. The stone, advancing years, and incessant toil had worn him to a shred. The clouds grew blacker. News came from England that his dear friends More and Fisher had died upon the scaffold. He had long ceased to care for life; and death, almost as sudden as he had longed for, gave him peace at last.

So ended Desiderius Erasmus, the world's idol for so many years; and dying heaped with undeserved but too intelligible anathemas, seeing all that he had laboured for swept away by the whirlwind.

Do not let me lead you to undervalue him. Without Erasmus, Luther would have been impossible; and Erasmus really succeeded—so much of him as deserved to succeed—in Luther's victory.

He was brilliantly gifted. His industry never tired. His intellect was true to itself; and no worldly motives ever tempted him into insincerity. He was even far braver than he professed to be. Had he been brought to the trial, he would have borne it better than many a man who boasted louder of his courage.

And yet, in his special scheme for remodelling the mind of Europe, he failed hopelessly—almost absurdly. He believed, himself, that his work was spoilt by the Reformation; but, in fact, under no conditions could any more have come of it.

Literature and cultivation will feed life when life exists already; and toleration and latitudinarianism are well enough when mind and conscience are awake and energetic of themselves.

When there is no spiritual life at all; when men live only for themselves and for sensual pleasure; when religion is superstition, and conscience a name, and God an idol half feared and half despised—then, for the restoration of the higher nature in man, qualities are needed different in kind from any which Erasmus possessed.

And now to go back to Luther. I cannot tell you all that Luther did; it would be to tell you all the story of the German Reformation. I want you rather to consider the kind of man that Luther was, and to see in his character how he came to achieve what he did.

You remember that the Elector of Saxony, after the Diet of Worms, sent him to the Castle of Wartburg,

to prevent him from being murdered or kidnapped. He remained there many months; and during that time the old ecclesiastical institutions of Germany were burning like a North American forest. The monasteries were broken up; the estates were appropriated by the nobles; the monks were sent wandering into the world. The bishops looked helplessly on while their ancient spiritual dominion was torn to pieces and trodden under foot. The Elector of Saxony, the Landgrave of Hesse, and several more of the princes, declared for the Reformation. The Protestants had a majority in the Diet, and controlled the force of the empire. Charles the Fifth, busy with his French wars, and in want of money, dared not press questions to a crisis which he had not power to cope with; and he was obliged for a time to recognize what he could not prevent. You would have thought Luther would have been well pleased to see the seed which he had sown bear fruit so rapidly; yet it was exactly while all this was going on that he experienced those temptations of the devil of which he has left so wonderful an account.

We shall have our own opinions on the nature of these apparitions. But Luther, it is quite certain, believed that Satan himself attacked him in person. Satan, he tells us, came often to him, and said, 'See what you have done. Behold this ancient Church—this mother of saints—polluted and defiled by brutal violence. And it is you—you, a poor ignorant monk, that have set the people on to their unholy work. Are you so much wiser than the saints who approved the

things which you have denounced? Popes, bishops, clergy, kings, emperors—are none of these—are not all these together—wiser than Martin Luther the monk?'

The devil, he says, caused him great agony by these suggestions. He fell into deep fits of doubt and humiliation and despondency. And wherever these thoughts came from we can only say that they were very natural thoughts—natural and right. He called them temptations; yet these were temptations which would not have occurred to any but a high-minded man.

He had, however, done only what duty had forced him to do. His business was to trust to God, who had begun the work and knew what He meant to make of it. His doubts and misgivings, therefore, he ascribed to Satan, and his enormous imaginative vigour gave body to the voice which was speaking in him.

He tells many humorous stories—not always producible—of the means with which he encountered his offensive visitor.

'The devil,' he says, 'is very proud, and what he least likes is to be laughed at.' One night he was disturbed by something rattling in his room; the modern unbeliever will suppose it was a mouse. He got up, lit a candle, searched the apartment through, and could find nothing—the Evil One was indisputably there.

'Oh!' he said, 'it is you, is it?' He returned to bed, and went to sleep.

Think as you please about the cause of the noise, but remember that Luther had not the least doubt that he was alone in the room with the actual devil, who, if he

could not overcome his soul, could at least twist his neck in a moment—and then think what courage there must have been in a man who could deliberately sleep in such a presence!

During his retirement he translated the Bible. The confusion at last became so desperate that he could no longer be spared; and believing that he was certain to be destroyed, he left Wartburg and returned to Wittenberg. Death was always before him as supremely imminent. He used to say that it would be a great disgrace to the Pope if he died in his bed. He was wanted once at Leipsic. His friends said if he went there Duke George would kill him.

'Duke George!' he said; 'I would go to Leipsic if it rained Duke Georges for nine days!'

No such cataclysm of Duke Georges happily took place. The single one there was would have gladly been mischievous if he could; but Luther outlived him—lived for twenty-four years after this, in continued toil, re-shaping the German Church, and giving form to its new doctrine.

Sacerdotalism, properly so called, was utterly abolished. The corruptions of the Church had all grown out of one root—the notion that the Christian priesthood possesses mystical power, conferred through episcopal ordination.

Religion, as Luther conceived it, did not consist in certain things done to and for a man by a so-called priest. It was the devotion of each individual soul to the service of God. Masses were nothing, and absolu-

tion was nothing; and a clergyman differed only from a layman in being set apart for the especial duties of teaching and preaching.

I am not concerned to defend Luther's view in this matter. It is a matter of fact only, that in getting rid of episcopal ordination, he dried up the fountain from which the mechanical and idolatrous conceptions of religion had sprung; and, in consequence, the religious life of Germany has expanded with the progress of knowledge, while priesthoods everywhere cling to the formulas of the past, in which they live, and move, and have their being.

Enough of this.

The peculiar doctrine which has passed into Europe under Luther's name is known as Justification by Faith. Bandied about as a watchword of party, it has by this time hardened into a formula, and has become barren as the soil of a trodden footpath. As originally proclaimed by Luther, it contained the deepest of moral truths. It expressed what was, and is, and must be, in one language or another, to the end of time, the conviction of every generous-minded man.

The service of God, as Luther learnt it from the monks, was a thing of desert and reward. So many good works done, so much to the right page in the great book; where the stock proved insufficient, there was the reserve fund of the merits of the saints, which the Church dispensed for money to those who needed.

'Merit!' Luther thought. 'What merit can there be in such a poor caitiff as man? The better a man is

—the more clearly he sees how little he is good for, the greater mockery it seems to attribute to him the notion of having deserved reward.'

'Miserable creatures that we are!' he said; 'we earn our bread in sin. Till we are seven years old, we do nothing but eat and drink and sleep and play; from seven to twenty-one we study four hours a day, the rest of it we run about and amuse ourselves; then we work till fifty, and then we grow again to be children. We sleep half our lives; we give God a tenth of our time: and yet we think that with our good works we can merit heaven. What have I been doing to-day? I have talked for two hours; I have been at meals three hours; I have been idle four hours! Ah, enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord!'

A perpetual struggle. For ever to be falling, yet to rise again and stumble forward with eyes turned to heaven—this was the best which would ever come of man. It was accepted in its imperfection by the infinite grace of God, who pities mortal weakness, and accepts the intention for the deed—who, when there is a sincere desire to serve Him, overlooks the shortcomings of infirmity.

Do you say such teaching leads to disregard of duty? All doctrines, when petrified into formulas, lead to that. But, as Luther said, 'where real faith is, a good life follows, as light follows the sun; faint and clouded, yet ever struggling to break through the mist which envelopes it, and welcoming the roughest discipline which tends to clear and raise it.

'The barley,' he says, in a homely but effective image—'the barley which we brew, the flax of which we weave our garments, must be bruised and torn ere they come to the use for which they are grown. So must Christians suffer. The natural creature must be combed and threshed. The old Adam must die, for the higher life to begin. If man is to rise to nobleness, he must first be slain.'

In modern language, the poet Goethe tells us the same truth. 'The natural man,' he says, 'is like the ore out of the iron mine. It is smelted in the furnace; it is forged into bars upon the anvil. A new nature is at last forced upon it, and it is made steel.'

It was this doctrine—it was this truth rather (the word doctrine reminds one of quack medicines)—which, quickening in Luther's mind, gave Europe its new life. It was the flame which, beginning with a small spark, kindled the hearth-fires in every German household.

Luther's own life was a model of quiet simplicity. He remained poor. He might have had money if he had wished; but he chose rather, amidst his enormous labour, to work at a turning-lathe for his livelihood.

He was sociable, cheerful, fond of innocent amusements, and delighted to encourage them. His table-talk, collected by his friends, makes one of the most brilliant books in the world. He had no monkish theories about the necessity of abstinence; but he was temperate from habit and principle. A salt herring and a hunch of bread was his ordinary meal; and he

was once four days without food of any sort, having emptied his larder among the poor.

All kinds of people thrust themselves on Luther for help. Flights of nuns from the dissolved convents came to him to provide for them—naked, shivering creatures, with scarce a rag to cover them. Eight florins were wanted once to provide clothes for some of them. 'Eight florins!' he said; 'and where am I to get eight florins?' Great people had made him presents of plate: it all went to market to be turned into clothes and food for the wretched.

Melancthon says that, unless provoked, he was usually very gentle and tolerant. He recognized, and was almost alone in recognizing, the necessity of granting liberty of conscience. No one hated Popery more than he did, yet he said:—

'The Papists must bear with us, and we with them. If they will not follow us, we have no right to force them. Wherever they can, they will hang, burn, behead, and strangle us. I shall be persecuted as long as I live, and most likely killed. But it must come to this at last—every man must be allowed to believe according to his conscience, and answer for his belief to his Maker.'

Erasmus said of Luther that there were two natures in him: sometimes he wrote like an apostle—sometimes like a raving ribald.

Doubtless, Luther could be impolite on occasions. When he was angry, invectives rushed from him like boulder rocks down a mountain torrent in flood. We

need not admire all that; in quiet times it is hard to understand it.

Here, for instance, is a specimen. Our Henry the Eighth, who began life as a highly orthodox sovereign, broke a lance with Luther for the Papacy.

Luther did not credit Henry with a composition which was probably his own after all. He thought the king was put forward by some of the English bishops —'Thomists' he calls them, as men who looked for the beginning and end of wisdom to the writings of Thomas Aquinas.

'Courage,' he exclaimed to them, 'swine that you are! burn me then, if you can and dare. Here I am; do your worst upon me. Scatter my ashes to all the winds—spread them through all seas. My spirit shall pursue you still. Living, I am the foe of the Papacy; and dead, I will be its foe twice over. Hogs of Thomists! Luther shall be the bear in your way—the lion in your path. Go where you will Luther shall cross you. Luther shall leave you neither peace nor rest till he has crushed in your brows of brass and dashed out your iron brains.'

Strong expressions; but the times were not gentle. The prelates whom he supposed himself to be addressing were the men who filled our Smithfield with the reek of burning human flesh.

Men of Luther's stature are like the violent forces of Nature herself—terrible when roused, and, in repose, majestic and beautiful. Of vanity he had not a trace. 'Do not call yourselves Lutherans,' he said; 'call

yourselves Christians. Who and what is Luther? Has Luther been crucified for the world?'

I mentioned his love of music. His songs and hymns were the expression of the very inmost heart of the German people. 'Music' he called 'the grandest and sweetest gift of God to man.' 'Satan hates music,' he said; 'he knows how it drives the evil spirit out of us.'

He was extremely interested in all natural things. Before the science of botany was dreamt of, Luther had divined the principle of vegetable life. 'The principle of marriage runs through all creation,' he said; 'and flowers as well as animals are male and female.'

A garden called out bursts of eloquence from him; beautiful sometimes as a finished piece of poetry.

One April day as he was watching the swelling buds, he exclaimed:—

'Praise be to God the Creator, who out of a dead world makes all alive again. See those shoots how they burgeon and swell. Image of the resurrection of the dead! Winter is death—summer is the resurrection. Between them lie spring and autumn, as the period of uncertainty and change. The proverb says—

> Trust not a day
> Ere birth of May.

Let us pray our Father in heaven to give us this day our daily bread.'

'We are in the dawn of a new era,' he said another time; 'we are beginning to think something of the

natural world which was ruined in Adam's fall. We are learning to see all round us the greatness and glory of the Creator. We can see the Almighty hand—the infinite goodness—in the humblest flower. We praise Him—we thank Him—we glorify Him—we recognize in creation the power of His word. He spoke and it was there. The stone of the peach is hard; but the soft kernel swells and bursts it when the time comes. An egg—what a thing is that! If an egg had never been seen in Europe, and a traveller had brought one from Calcutta, how would all the world have wondered!'

And again:—

'If a man could make a single rose, we should give him an empire; yet roses, and flowers no less beautiful, are scattered in profusion over the world, and no one regards them.'

There are infinite other things which I should like to tell you about Luther, but time wears on. I must confine what more I have to say to a single matter—for which more than any other he has been blamed—I mean his marriage.

He himself, a monk and a priest, had taken a vow of celibacy. The person whom he married had been a nun, and as such had taken a vow of celibacy also.

The marriage was unquestionably no affair of pas sion. Luther had come to middle age when it was brought about, when temptations of that kind lose their power; and among the many accusations which have been brought against his early life, no one has ventured to charge him with incontinence. His taking a wife

was a grave act deliberately performed; and it was either meant as a public insult to established ecclesiastical usage, or else he considered that the circumstances of the time required it of him.

Let us see what those circumstances were. The enforcement of celibacy on the clergy was, in Luther's opinion, both iniquitous in itself, and productive of enormous immorality. The impurity of the religious orders had been the jest of satirists for a hundred years. It had been the distress and perplexity of pious and serious persons. Luther himself was impressed with profound pity for the poor men, who were cut off from the natural companionship which nature had provided for them—who were thus exposed to temptations which they ought not to have been called upon to resist.

The dissolution of the religious houses had enormously complicated the problem. Germany was covered with friendless and homeless men and women adrift upon the world. They came to Luther to tell them what to do; and advice was of little service without example.

The world had grown accustomed to immorality in such persons. They might have lived together in concubinage, and no one would have thought much about it. Their marriage was regarded with a superstitious terror as a kind of incest.

Luther, on the other hand, regarded marriage as the natural and healthy state in which clergy as well as laity were intended to live. Immorality was hateful to him as a degradation of a sacrament—impious, loath-

some, and dishonoured. Marriage was the condition in which humanity was at once purest, best, and happiest

For himself, he had become inured to a single life. He had borne the injustice of his lot, when the burden had been really heavy. But time and custom had lightened the load; and had there been nothing at issue but his own personal happiness, he would not have given further occasion to the malice of his enemies.

But tens of thousands of poor creatures were looking to him to guide them—guide them by precept, or guide them by example. He had satisfied himself that the vow of celibacy had been unlawfully imposed both on him and them—that, as he would put it, it had been a snare devised by the devil. He saw that all eyes were fixed on him, that it was no use to tell others that they might marry, unless he himself led the way, and married first. And it was characteristic of him that, having resolved to do the thing, he did it in the way most likely to show the world his full thought upon the matter.

That this was his motive, there is no kind of doubt whatever.

'We may be able to live unmarried,' he said; 'but in these days we must protest in deed as well as word, against the doctrine of celibacy. It is an invention of Satan. Before I took my wife, I had made up my mind that I must marry some one; and had I been overtaken by illness, I should have betrothed myself to some pious maiden.'

He asked nobody's advice. Had he let his intention

be suspected, the moderate respectable people—the people who thought like Erasmus—those who wished well to what was good, but wished also to stand well with the world's opinion—such persons as these would have overwhelmed him with remonstrances. 'When you marry,' he said to a friend in a similar situation, 'be quiet about it, or mountains will rise between you and your wishes. If I had not been swift and secret, I should have had the whole world in my way.'

Catherine Bora, the lady whom he chose for his wife, was a nun of good family, left homeless and shelterless by the breaking-up of her convent. She was an ordinary, unimaginative body—plain in person and plain in mind, in no sense whatever a heroine of romance—but a decent, sensible, commonplace Haus Frau.

The age of romance was over with both of them; yet, for all that, never marriage brought a plainer blessing with it. They began with respect, and ended with steady affection.

'The happiest life on earth, Luther used to say, is with a pious good wife: in peace and quiet, contented with a little, and giving God thanks.

He spoke from his own experience. His Katie, as he called her, was not clever, and he had numerous stories to tell of the beginning of their adventures together.

'The first year of married life is an odd business,' he says. 'At meals, where you used to be alone, you are yourself and somebody else. When you wake in the morning, there are a pair of tails close to you on

the pillow. My Katie used to sit with me when I was at work. She thought she ought not to be silent. She did not know what to say, so she would ask me.

'"Herr Doctor, is not the master of the ceremonies in Prussia the brother of the Margrave?"'

She was an odd woman.

'Doctor,' she said to him one day, 'how is it that under Popery we prayed so often and so earnestly, and now our prayers are cold and seldom?'

Katie might have spoken for herself. Luther, to the last, spent hours of every day in prayer. He advised her to read the Bible a little more. She said she had read enough of it, and knew half of it by heart. 'Ah!' he said, 'here begins weariness of the word of God. One day new lights will rise up, and the Scriptures will be despised and be flung away into the corner.'

His relations with his children were singularly beautiful. The recollection of his own boyhood made him especially gentle with them, and their fancies and imaginations delighted him.

Children, to him, were images of unfallen nature. 'Children,' he said, 'imagine heaven a place where rivers run with cream, and trees are hung with cakes and plums. Do not blame them. They are but showing their simple, natural, unquestioning, all-believing faith.'

One day, after dinner, when the fruit was on the table, the children were watching it with longing eyes. 'That is the way,' he said, 'in which we grown Christians ought to look for the Judgment Day.'

His daughter Magdalen died when she was fourteen. He speaks of his loss with the unaffected simplicity of natural grief, yet with the faith of a man who had not the slightest doubt into whose hands his treasure was passing. Perfect nature and perfect piety. Neither one emotion nor the other disguised or suppressed.

You will have gathered something, I hope, from these faint sketches, of what Luther was; you will be able to see how far he deserves to be called by our modern new lights, a Philistine or a heretic. We will now return to the subject with which we began, and resume, in a general conclusion, the argument of these Lectures.

In part, but not wholly, it can be done in Luther's words.

One regrets that Luther did not know Erasmus better, or knowing him, should not have treated him with more forbearance.

Erasmus spoke of him for the most part with kindness. He interceded for him, defended him, and only with the utmost reluctance was driven into controversy with him.

Luther, on the other hand, saw in Erasmus a man who was false to his convictions; who played with truth; who, in his cold, sarcastic scepticism, believed in nothing —scarcely even in God. He was unaware of his own obligations to him, for Erasmus was not a person who would trumpet out his own good deeds.

Thus Luther says:—

'All you who honour Christ, I pray you hate

Erasmus. He is a scoffer and a mocker. He speaks in riddles; and jests at Popery and Gospel, and Christ and God, with his uncertain speeches. He might have served the Gospel if he would, but, like Judas, he has betrayed the Son of Man with a kiss. He is not with us, and he is not with our foes; and I say with Joshua, Choose whom ye will serve. He thinks we should trim to the times, and hang our cloaks to the wind. He is himself his own first object; and as he lived, he died.

'I take Erasmus to be the worst enemy that Christ has had for a thousand years. Intellect does not understand religion, and when it comes to the things of God, it laughs at them. He scoffs like Lucian, and by-and-by he will say, Behold, how are these among the saints whose life we counted for folly.

'I bid you, therefore, take heed of Erasmus. He treats theology as a fool's jest, and the Gospel as a fable good for the ignorant to believe.'

Of Erasmus personally, much of this was unjust and untrue. Erasmus knew many things which it would have been well for Luther to have known; and, as a man, he was better than his principles.

But if for the name of Erasmus we substitute the theory of human things which Erasmus represented, between that creed and Luther there is, and must be, an eternal antagonism.

If to be true in heart and just in act are the first qualities necessary for the elevation of humanity—if without these all else is worthless, intellectual culture cannot give what intellectual culture does not require

or imply. You cultivate the plant which has already life; you will waste your labour in cultivating a stone. The moral life is the counterpart of the natural, alike mysterious in its origin, and alike visible only in its effects.

Intellectual gifts are like gifts of strength, or wealth, or rank, or worldly power—splendid instruments if nobly used—but requiring qualities to use them nobler and better than themselves.

The rich man may spend his wealth on vulgar luxury. The clever man may live for intellectual enjoyment—refined enjoyment it may be—but enjoyment still, and still centering in self.

If the spirit of Erasmus had prevailed, it would have been with modern Europe as with the Roman Empire in its decay. The educated would have been mere sceptics; the multitude would have been sunk in superstition. In both alike all would have perished which deserves the name of manliness.

And this leads me to the last observation that I have to make to you. In the sciences, the philosopher leads; the rest of us take on trust what he tells us. The spiritual progress of mankind has followed the opposite course. Each forward step has been made first among the people, and the last converts have been among the learned.

The explanation is not far to look for. In the sciences there is no temptation of self-interest to mislead. In matters which affect life and conduct, the interests and prejudices of the cultivated classes are

enlisted on the side of the existing order of things, and their better trained faculties and larger acquirements serve only to find them arguments for believing what they wish to believe.

Simpler men have less to lose; they come more in contact with the realities of life, and they learn wisdom in the experience of suffering.

Thus it was that when the learned and the wise turned away from Christianity, the fishermen of the Galilean lake listened, and a new life began for mankind. A miner's son converted Germany to the Reformation. The London artisans and the peasants of Buckinghamshire went to the stake for doctrines which were accepted afterwards as a second revelation.

So it has been; so it will be to the end. When a great teacher comes again upon the earth, he will find his first disciples where Christ found them and Luther found them. Had Luther written for the learned, the words which changed the face of Europe would have slumbered in impotence on the bookshelves.

In appealing to the German nation, you will agree, I think, with me, that he did well and not ill; you will not sacrifice his great name to the disdain of a shallow philosophy, or to the grimacing of a dead superstition, whose ghost is struggling out of its grave.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE REFORMATION ON THE SCOTTISH CHARACTER:

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT EDINBURGH,

NOVEMBER, 1865.

I HAVE undertaken to speak this evening on the effects of the Reformation in Scotland, and I consider myself a very bold person to have come here on any such undertaking. In the first place, the subject is one with which it is presumptuous for a stranger to meddle. Great national movements can only be understood properly by the people whose disposition they represent. We say ourselves about our own history that only Englishmen can properly comprehend it. The late Chevalier Bunsen once said to me of our own Reformation in England, that, for his part, he could not conceive how we had managed to come by such a thing. We seemed to him to be an obdurate, impenetrable, stupid people, hide-bound by tradition and precedent, and too self-satisfied to be either willing or able to take in new ideas upon any theoretic

subject whatever, especially German ideas. That is to say, he could not get inside the English mind. He did not know that some people go furthest and go fastest when they look one way and row the other. It is the same with every considerable nation. They work out their own political and spiritual lives, through tempers, humours, and passions peculiar to themselves; and the same disposition which produces the result is required to interpret it afterwards. This is one reason why I should feel diffident about what I have undertaken. Another is, that I do not conceal from myself that the subject is an exceedingly delicate one. The blazing passions of those stormy sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are no longer, happily, at their old temperature. The story of those times can now be told or listened to with something like impartiality. Yet, if people no longer hate each other for such matters, the traditions of the struggle survive in strong opinions and sentiments, which it is easy to wound without intending it.

My own conviction with respect to all great social and religious convulsions is the extremely commonplace one that much is to be said on both sides. I believe that nowhere and at no time any such struggle can take place on a large scale unless each party is contending for something which has a great deal of truth in it. Where the right is plain, honest, wise, and noble-minded men are all on one side; and only rogues and fools are on the other. Where the wise and good are divided, the truth is generally found to

be divided also. But this is precisely what cannot be admitted as long as the conflict continues. Men begin to fight about things when reason and argument fail to convince them. They make up in passion what is wanting in logic. Each side believes that all the right is theirs—that their enemies have all the bad qualities which their language contains names for; and even now, on the subject on which I have to talk to-night, one has but to take up any magazine, review, newspaper, or party organ of any kind which touches on it, to see that opinion is still Whig or Tory, Cavalier or Roundhead, Protestant or Catholic, as the case may be. The unfortunate person who is neither wholly one nor wholly the other is in the position of Hamlet's 'baser nature,' 'between the incensed points of mighty opposites.' He is the Laodicean, neither cold nor hot, whom decent people consider bad company. He pleases no one, and hurts the sensitiveness of all.

Here, then, are good reasons why I should have either not come here at all, or else should have chosen some other matter to talk about. In excuse for persisting, I can but say that the subject is one about which I have been led by circumstances to read and think considerably; and though, undoubtedly, each of us knows more about himself and his own affairs than any one else can possibly know, yet a stranger's eye will sometimes see things which escape those more immediately interested; and I allow myself to hope that I may have something to say not altogether undeserving your attention. I shall touch as little as possible

on questions of opinion; and if I tread by accident on any sensitive point, I must trust to your kindness to excuse my awkwardness.

Well, then, if we look back on Scotland as it stood in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, we see a country in which the old feudal organization continued, so far as it generally affected the people, more vigorous than in any other part of civilized Europe. Elsewhere, the growth of trade and of large towns had created a middle class, with an organization of their own, independent of the lords. In Scotland, the towns were still scanty and poor; such as they were, they were for the most part under the control of the great nobleman who happened to live nearest to them; and a people, as in any sense independent of lords, knights, abbots, or prelates, under whose rule they were born, had as yet no existence. The tillers of the soil (and the soil was very miserably tilled) lived under the shadow of the castle or the monastery. They followed their lord's fortunes, fought his battles, believed in his politics, and supported him loyally in his sins or his good deeds, as the case might be. There was much moral beauty in the life of those times. The loyal attachment of man to man—of liege servant to liege lord—of all forms under which human beings can live and work together, has most of grace and humanity about it. It cannot go on without mutual confidence and affection—mutual benefits given and received. The length of time which the system lasted proves that in the main there must have been a fine fidelity in the people—

truth, justice, generosity in their leaders. History brings down many bad stories to us out of those times; just as in these islands now-a-days you may find bad instances of the abuses of rights of property. You may find stories—too many also—of husbands ill-using their wives, and so on. Yet we do not therefore lay the blame on marriage, or suppose that the institution of property on the whole does more harm than good. I do not doubt that down in that feudal system somewhere lie the roots of some of the finest qualities in the European peoples.

So much for the temporal side of the matter; and the spiritual was not very unlike it. As no one lived independently, in our modern sense of the word, so no one thought independently. The minds of men were looked after by a Church which, for a long time also, did, I suppose, very largely fulfil the purpose for which it was intended. It kept alive and active the belief that the world was created and governed by a just Being, who hated sins and crimes, and steadily punished such things. It taught men that they had immortal souls, and that this little bit of life was an entirely insignificant portion of their real existence. It taught these truths, indeed, along with a great deal which we now consider to have been a mistake—a great many theories of earthly things which have since passed away, and special opinions clothed in outward forms and ritual observances which we here, most of us at least, do not think essential for our soul's safety. But mistakes like these are hurtful only when persisted in

in the face of fuller truth, after truth has been discovered. Only a very foolish man would now uphold the Ptolemaic astronomy. But the Ptolemaic astronomy, when first invented, was based on real if incomplete observations, and formed a groundwork without which further progress in that science would have been probably impossible. The theories and ceremonials of the Catholic Church suited well with an age in which little was known and much was imagined: when superstition was active and science was not yet born. When I am told here or anywhere that the Middle Ages were times of mere spiritual darkness and priestly oppression, with the other usual formulas, I say, as I said before, if the Catholic Church, for those many centuries that it reigned supreme over all men's consciences, was no better than the thing which we see in the generation which immediately preceded the Reformation, it could not have existed at all. You might as well argue that the old fading tree could never have been green and young. Institutions do not live on lies. They either live by the truth and usefulness which there is in them, or they do not live at all.

So things went on for several hundred years. There were scandals enough, and crimes enough, and feuds, and murders, and civil wars. Systems, however good, cannot prevent evil. They can but compress it within moderate and tolerable limits. I should conclude, however, that, measuring by the average happiness of the masses of the people, the mediæval institutions were very well suited for the inhabitants of these countries as

they then were. Adam Smith and Bentham themselves could hardly have mended them if they had tried.

But times change, and good things as well as bad grow old and have to die. The heart of the matter which the Catholic Church had taught was the fear of God; but the language of it and the formulas of it were made up of human ideas and notions about things which the mere increase of human knowledge gradually made incredible. To trace the reason of this would lead us a long way. It is intelligible enough, but it would take us into subjects better avoided here. It is enough to say that, while the essence of religion remains the same, the mode in which it is expressed changes and has changed—changes as living languages change and become dead, as institutions change, as forms of government change, as opinions on all things in heaven and earth change, as half the theories held at this time among ourselves will probably change—that is, the outward and mortal parts of them. Thus the Catholic formulas, instead of living symbols, become dead and powerless cabalistic signs. The religion lost its hold on the conscience and the intellect, and the effect, singularly enough, appeared in the shepherds before it made itself felt among the flocks. From the see of St Peter to the far monasteries in the Hebrides or the Isle of Arran, the laity were shocked and scandalized at the outrageous doings of high cardinals, prelates, priests, and monks. It was clear enough that these great personages themselves did not believe what they taught; so why should the people believe it? And

serious men, to whom the fear of God was a living reality, began to look into the matter for themselves. The first steps everywhere were taken with extreme reluctance; and had the popes and cardinals been wise, they would have taken the lead in the inquiry, cleared their teaching of its lumber, and taken out a new lease of life both for it and for themselves. An infallible pope and an infallible council might have done something in this way, if good sense had been among the attributes of their omniscience. What they did do was something very different. It was as if, when the new astronomy began to be taught, the professors of that science in all the universities of Europe had met together and decided that Ptolemy's cycles and epicycles were eternal verities; that the theory of the rotation of the earth was and must be a damnable heresy; and had invited the civil authorities to help them in putting down by force all doctrines but their own. This, or something very like it, was the position taken up in theology by the Council of Trent. The bishops assembled there did not reason. They decided by vote that certain things were true, and were to be believed; and the only arguments which they condescended to use were fire and faggot, and so on. How it fared with them, and with this experiment of theirs, we all know tolerably well.

The effect was very different in different countries. Here, in Scotland, the failure was most marked and complete, but the way in which it came about was in many ways peculiar. In Germany, Luther was sup-

ported by princes and nobles. In England, the Reformation rapidly mixed itself up with politics and questions of rival jurisdiction. Both in England and Germany, the revolution, wherever it established itself, was accepted early by the Crown or the Government, and by them legally recognized. Here, it was far otherwise: the Protestantism of Scotland was the creation of the commons, as in turn the commons may be said to have been created by Protestantism. There were many young high-spirited men, belonging to the noblest families in the country, who were among the earliest to rally round the Reforming preachers; but authority, both in Church and State, set the other way. The congregations who gathered in the fields around Wishart and John Knox were, for the most part, farmers, labourers, artisans, tradesmen, or the smaller gentry; and thus, for the first time in Scotland, there was created an organization of men detached from the lords and from the Church—brave, noble, resolute, daring people, bound together by a sacred cause, unrecognized by the leaders whom they had followed hitherto with undoubting allegiance. That spirit which grew in time to be the ruling power of Scotland—that which formed eventually its laws and its creed, and determined its after fortunes as a nation—had its first germ in these half-outlawed wandering congregations. In this it was that the Reformation in Scotland differed from the Reformation in any other part of Europe. Elsewhere it found a middle class existing—created already by trade or by other causes. It raised and

elevated them, but it did not materially affect their political condition. In Scotland, the commons, as an organized body, were simply created by religion. Before the Reformation had no political existence; and therefore it has been that the print of their origin has gone so deeply into their social constitution. On them, and them only, the burden of the work of the Reformation was eventually thrown; and when they triumphed at last, it was inevitable that both they and it should react one upon the other.

How this came about I must endeavour to describe, although I can give but a brief sketch of an exceedingly complicated matter. Everybody knows the part played by the aristocracy of Scotland in the outward revolution, when the Reformation first became the law of the land. It would seem at first sight as if it had been the work of the whole nation—as if it had been a thing on which high and low were heartily united. Yet on the first glance below the surface you see that the greater part of the noble lords concerned in that business cared nothing about the Reformation at all; or, if they cared, they rather disliked it than otherwise. How, then, did they come to act as they did? or, how came they to permit a change of such magnitude when they had so little sympathy with it? I must make a slight circuit to look for the explanation.

The one essentially noble feature in the great families of Scotland was their patriotism. They loved Scotland and Scotland's freedom with a passion proportioned to the difficulty with which they had defended their liberties;

and yet the wisest of them had long seen that, sooner or later, union with England was inevitable; and the question was, how that union was to be brought about—how they were to make sure that, when it came, they should take their place at England's side as equals, and not as a dependency. It had been arranged that the little Mary Stuart should marry our English Edward VI., and the difficulty was to be settled so. They would have been contented, they said, if Scotland had had the 'lad' and England the 'lass.' As it stood, they broke their bargain, and married the little queen away into France, to prevent the Protector Somerset from getting hold of her. Then, however, appeared an opposite danger; the queen would become a Frenchwoman; her French mother governed Scotland with French troops and French ministers; the country would become a French province, and lose its freedom equally. Thus an English party began again; and as England was then in the middle of her great anti-Church revolution, so the Scottish nobles began to be anti-Church. It was not for doctrines: neither they nor their brothers in England cared much about doctrines; but in both countries the Church was rich—much richer than there seemed any occasion for it to be. Harry the Eighth had been sharing among the laity the spoils of the English monasteries; the Scotch Lords saw in a similar process the probability of a welcome addition to their own scanty incomes. Mary of Guise and the French stood by the Church, and the Church stood by them; and so it came about that the great families—even those who,

like the Hamiltons, were most closely connected with France—were tempted over by the bait to the other side. They did not want reformed doctrines, but they wanted the Church lands; and so they came to patronize, or endure, the Reformers, because the Church hated them, and because they weakened the Church; and thus for a time, and especially as long as Mary Stuart was queen of France, all classes in Scotland, high and low, seemed to fraternize in favour of the revolution.

And it seemed as if the union of the realms could be effected at last, at the same juncture, and in connection with the same movement. Next in succession to the Scotch crown, after Mary Stuart, was the house of Hamilton. Elizabeth, who had just come to the English throne, was supposed to be in want of a husband. The heir of the Hamiltons was of her own age, and in years past had been thought of for her by her father. What could be more fit than to make a match between those two? Send a Scot south to be King of England, find or make some pretext to shake off Mary Stuart, who had forsaken her native country, and so join the crowns, the 'lass' and the 'lad' being now in the right relative position. Scotland would thus annex her old oppressor, and give her a new dynasty.

I seem to be straying from the point; but these political schemes had so much to do with the actions of the leading men at that time, that the story of the Reformation cannot be understood without them. It was thus, and with these incongruous objects, that the

combination was formed which overturned the old Church of Scotland in 1559-60, confiscated its possessions, destroyed its religious houses, and changed its creed. The French were driven away from Leith by Elizabeth's troops; the Reformers took possession of the churches; and the Parliament of 1560 met with a clear stage to determine for themselves the future fate of the country. Now, I think it certain that, if the Scotch nobility, having once accepted the Reformation, had continued loyal to it—especially if Elizabeth had met their wishes in the important point of the marriage—the form of the Scotch Kirk would have been something extremely different from what it in fact became. The people were perfectly well inclined to follow their natural leaders if the matters on which their hearts were set had received tolerable consideration from them, and the democratic form of the ecclesiastical constitution would have been inevitably modified. One of the conditions of the proposed compact with England was the introduction of the English Liturgy and the English Church constitution. This too, at the outset, and with fair dealing, would not have been found impossible. But it soon became clear that the religious interests of Scotland were the very last thing which would receive consideration from any of the high political personages concerned. John Knox had dreamt of a constitution like that which he had seen working under Calvin at Geneva—a constitution in which the clergy as ministers of God should rule all things—rule politically at the

council-board, and rule in private at the fireside. It was soon made plain to Knox that Scotland was not Geneva. 'Eh, mon,' said the younger Maitland to him, 'then we may all bear the barrow now to build the House of the Lord.' Not exactly. The churches were left to the ministers; the worldly good things and worldly power remained with the laity; and as to religion, circumstances would decide what they would do about that. Again, I am not speaking of all the great men of those times. Glencairn, Ruthven, young Argyll—above all, the Earl of Moray—really did in some degree interest themselves in the Kirk. But what most of them felt was perhaps rather broadly expressed by Maitland when he called religion 'a bogle of the nursery.' That was the expression which a Scotch statesman of those days actually ventured to use. Had Elizabeth been conformable, no doubt they would in some sense or other have remained on the side of the Reformation. But here, too, there was a serious hitch. Elizabeth would not marry Arran. Elizabeth would be no party to any of their intrigues. She detested Knox. She detested Protestantism entirely, in all shapes in which Knox approved of it. She affronted the nobles on one side, she affronted the people on another; and all idea of uniting the two crowns after the fashion proposed by the Scotch Parliament she utterly and entirely repudiated. She was right enough, perhaps, so far as this was concerned; but she left the ruling families extremely perplexed as to the course which

they would follow. They had allowed the country to be revolutionized in the teeth of their own sovereign, and what to do next they did not very well know.

It was at this crisis that circumstances came in to their help. Francis the Second died. Mary Stuart was left a childless widow. Her connection with the Crown of France was at an end, and all danger on that side to the liberties of Scotland at an end also. The Arran scheme having failed, she would be a second card as good as the first to play for the English Crown—as good as he, or better, for she would have the English Catholics on her side. So, careless how it would affect religion, and making no condition at all about that, the same men who a year before were ready to whistle Mary Stuart down the wind, now invited her back to Scotland; the same men who had been the loudest friends of Elizabeth, now encouraged Mary Stuart to persist in the pretension to the Crown of England, which had led to all the past trouble. While in France, she had assumed the title of Queen of England. She had promised to abandon it, but, finding her own people ready to support her in withdrawing her promise, she stood out, insisting that at all events the English Parliament should declare her next in the succession; and it was well known that, as soon as the succession was made sure in her favour, some rascal would be found to put a knife or a bullet into Elizabeth. The object of the Scotch nobles was political, national, patriotic. For religion it was no great matter either way; and as they had before acted with the Protestants,

so now they were ready to turn about, and openly or tacitly act with the Catholics. Mary Stuart's friends in England and on the Continent were Catholics, and therefore it would not do to offend them. First, she was allowed to have mass at Holyrood; then there was a move for a broader toleration. That one mass, Knox said, was more terrible to him than ten thousand armed men landed in the country—and he had perfectly good reason for saying so. He thoroughly understood that it was the first step towards a counter-revolution which in time would cover all Scotland and England, and carry them back to Popery. Yet he preached to deaf ears. Even Murray was so bewitched with the notion of the English succession, that for a year and a half he ceased to speak to Knox; and as it was with Murray, so it was far more with all the rest—their zeal for religion was gone no one knew where. Of course Elizabeth would not give way. She might as well, she said, herself prepare her shroud; and then conspiracies came, and under-ground intrigues with the Romanist English noblemen. France and Spain were to invade England, Scotland was to open its ports to their fleets, and its soil to their armies, giving them a safe base from which to act, and a dry road over the Marches to London. And if Scotland had remained unchanged from what it had been—had the direction of its fortunes remained with the prince and with the nobles, sooner or later it would have come to this. But suddenly it appeared that there was a new power in this country which no one suspected till it was felt.

The commons of Scotland had hitherto been the creatures of the nobles. They had neither will nor opinion of their own. They thought and acted in the spirit of their immediate allegiance. No one seems to have dreamt that there would be any difficulty in dealing with them if once the great families agreed upon a common course. Yet it appeared, when the pressure came, that religion, which was the plaything of the nobles, was to the people a clear matter of life and death. They might love their country; they might be proud of anything which would add lustre to its crown; but if it was to bring back the Pope and Popery—if it threatened to bring them back—if it looked that way—they would have nothing to do with it; nor would they allow it to be done. Allegiance was well enough; but there was a higher allegiance suddenly discovered which superseded all earthly considerations. I know nothing finer in Scottish history than the way in which the commons of the Lowlands took their places by the side of Knox in the great convulsions which followed. If all others forsook him, they at least would never forsake him while tongue remained to speak and hand remained to strike. Broken they might have been, trampled out as the Huguenots at last were trampled out in France, had Mary Stuart been less than the most imprudent or the most unlucky of sovereigns. But Providence, or the folly of those with whom they had to deal, fought for them. I need not follow the wild story of the crimes and catastrophes in which Mary Stuart's short reign in Scotland closed.

Neither is her own share, be it great or small, or none at all, in those crimes of any moment to us here. It is enough that, both before that strange business and after it, when at Holyrood or across the Border, in Sheffield or Tutbury, her ever favourite dream was still the English throne. Her road towards it was through a Catholic revolution and the murder of Elizabeth. It is enough that, both before and after, the aristocracy of Scotland, even those among them who had seemed most zealous for the Reformation, were eager to support her. John Knox alone, and the commons, whom Knox had raised into a political power, remained true.

Much, indeed, is to be said for the Scotch nobles. In the first shock of the business at Kirk-o'-Field, they forgot their politics in a sense of national disgrace. They sent the queen to Loch Leven. They intended to bring her to trial, and, if she was proved guilty, to expose and perhaps punish her. All parties for a time agreed in this—even the Hamiltons themselves; and had they been left alone they would have done it. But they had a perverse neighbour in England, to whom crowned heads were sacred. Elizabeth, it might have been thought, would have had no particular objection; but Elizabeth had aims of her own which baffled calculation. Elizabeth, the representative of revolution, yet detested revolutionists. The Reformers in Scotland, the Huguenots in France, the insurgents in the United Provinces, were the only friends she had in Europe. For her own safety she was obliged to encourage them; yet she hated them all, and would at any moment have

abandoned them all, if, in any other way, she could have secured herself. She might have conquered her personal objection to Knox—she could not conquer her aversion to a Church which rose out of revolt against authority, which was democratic in constitution and republican in politics. When driven into alliance with the Scotch Protestants, she angrily and passionately disclaimed any community of creed with them; and for subjects to sit in judgment on their prince was a precedent which she would not tolerate. Thus she flung her mantle over Mary Stuart. She told the Scotch Council here in Edinburgh that, if they hurt a hair of her head, she would harry their country, and hang them all on the trees round the town, if she could find any trees there for that purpose. She tempted the queen to England with her fair promises after the battle of Langside, and then, to her astonishment, imprisoned her. Yet she still shielded her reputation, still fostered her party in Scotland, still incessantly threatened and incessantly endeavoured to restore her. She kept her safe, because, in her lucid intervals, her ministers showed her the madness of acting otherwise. Yet for three years she kept her own people in a fever of apprehension. She made a settled Government in Scotland impossible; till, distracted and perplexed, the Scottish statesmen went back to their first schemes. They assured themselves that in one way or other the Queen of Scots would sooner or later come again among them. They, and others besides them, believed that Elizabeth was cutting her own throat, and that the best that they

could do was to recover their own queen's favour, and make the most of her and her titles; and so they lent themselves again to the English Catholic conspiracies.

The Earl of Moray—the one supremely noble man then living in the country—was put out of the way by an assassin. French and Spanish money poured in, and French and Spanish armies were to be again invited over to Scotland. This is the form in which the drama unfolds itself in the correspondence of the time. Maitland, the soul and spirit of it all, said, in scorn, that 'he would make the Queen of England sit upon her tail and whine like a whipped dog.' The only powerful noblemen who remained on the Protestant side were Lennox, Morton, and Mar. Lord Lennox was a poor creature, and was soon despatched; Mar was old and weak; and Morton was an unprincipled scoundrel, who used the Reformation only as a stalking-horse to cover the spoils which he had clutched in the confusion, and was ready to desert the cause at any moment if the balance of advantage shifted. Even the ministers of the Kirk were fooled and flattered over. Maitland told Mary Stuart that he had gained them all except one.

John Knox alone defied both his threats and his persuasions. Good reason has Scotland to be proud of Knox. He only, in this wild crisis, saved the Kirk which he had founded, and saved with it Scottish and English freedom. But for Knox, and what he was able still to do, it is almost certain that the Duke of Alva's army would have been landed on the eastern coast

The conditions were drawn out and agreed upon for the reception, the support, and the stay of the Spanish troops. Two-thirds of the English peerage had bound themselves to rise against Elizabeth, and Alva waited only till Scotland itself was quiet. Only that quiet would not be. Instead of quiet came three dreadful years of civil war. Scotland was split into factions, to which the mother and son gave names. The queen's lords, as they were called, with unlimited money from France and Flanders, held Edinburgh and Glasgow; all the border line was theirs, and all the north and west. Elizabeth's Council, wiser than their mistress, barely squeezed out of her reluctant parsimony enough to keep Mar and Morton from making terms with the rest; but there her assistance ended. She would still say nothing, promise nothing, bind herself to nothing, and, so far as she was concerned, the war would have been soon enough brought to a close. But away at St Andrews, John Knox, broken in body, and scarcely able to stagger up the pulpit stairs, still thundered in the parish church; and his voice, it was said, was like ten thousand trumpets braying in the ear of Scottish Protestantism. All the Lowlands answered to his call. Our English Cromwell found in the man of religion a match for the man of honour. Before Cromwell, all over the Lothians and across from St Andrews to Stirling and Glasgow—through farm, and town, and village—the words of Knox had struck the inmost chords of the Scottish commons' hearts. Passing over knight and noble, he had touched the farmer, the peasant, the petty trades-

man, and the artisan, and turned the men of clay into men of steel. The village preacher, when he left his pulpit, doffed cap and cassock, and donned morion and steel-coat. The Lothian yeoman's household became for the nonce a band of troopers, who would cross swords with the night riders of Buccleuch. It was a terrible time, a time rather of anarchy than of defined war, for it was without form or shape. Yet the horror of it was everywhere. Houses and villages were burned, and women and children tossed on pikepoint into the flames. Strings of poor men were dangled day after day from the walls of Edinburgh Castle. A word any way from Elizabeth would have ended it, but that word Elizabeth would never speak; and, maddened with suffering, the people half believed that she was feeding the fire for her own bad purposes, when it was only that she would not make up her mind to allow a crowned princess to be dethroned. No earthly influence could have held men true in such a trial. The noble lords—the Earl of Morton and such-like—would have made their own conditions, and gone with the rest; but the vital force of the Scotch nation, showing itself where it was least looked for, would not have it so.

A very remarkable account of the state of the Scotch commons at this time is to be found in a letter of an English emissary, who had been sent by Lord Burleigh to see how things were going there. It was not merely a new creed that they had got; it was a new vital power. 'You would be astonished to see how men are changed here,' this writer said. 'There is little of that

submission to those above them which there used to be. The poor think and act for themselves. They are growing strong, confident, independent. The farms are better cultivated; the farmers are growing rich. The merchants at Leith are thriving, and, notwithstanding the pirates, they are increasing their ships and opening a brisk trade with France.'

All this while civil war was raging, and the flag of Queen Mary was still floating over Edinburgh Castle. It surprised the English; still more it surprised the politicians. It was the one thing which disconcerted, baffled, and finally ruined the schemes and the dreams of Maitland. When he had gained the aristocracy, he thought that he had gained everybody, and, as it turned out, he had all his work still to do. The Spaniards did not come. The prudent Alva would not risk invasion till Scotland at least was assured. As time passed on, the English conspiracies were discovered and broken up. The Duke of Norfolk lost his head; the Queen of Scots was found to have been mixed up with the plots to murder Elizabeth; and Elizabeth at last took courage and recognized James. Supplies of money ceased to come from abroad, and gradually the tide turned. The Protestant cause once more grew towards the ascendant. The great families one by one came round again; and, as the backward movement began, the Massacre of St Bartholomew gave it a fresh and tremendous impulse. Even the avowed Catholics—the Hamiltons, the Gordons, the Scotts, the Kers, the Maxwells—quailed before the wail of rage and sorrow which

at that great horror rose over their country. The Queen's party dwindled away to a handful of desperate politicians, who still clung to Edinburgh Castle. But Elizabeth's "peace-makers,' as the big English cannon were called, came round, at the Regent's request, from Berwick; David's tower, as Knox had long ago foretold, 'ran down over the cliff like a sandy brae;' and the cause of Mary Stuart in Scotland was extinguished for ever. Poor Grange, who deserved a better end, was hanged at the Market Cross. Secretary Maitland, the cause of all the mischief—the cleverest man, as far as intellect went, in all Britain—died (so later rumour said) by his own hand. A nobler version of his end is probably a truer one: He had been long ill—so ill that when the castle cannon were fired, he had been carried into the cellars as unable to bear the sound. The breaking down of his hopes finished him. 'The secretary,' wrote some one from the spot to Cecil, 'is dead of grief, being unable to endure the great hatred which all this people bears towards him.' It would be well if some competent man would write a life of Maitland, or at least edit his papers. They contain by far the clearest account of the inward movements of the time; and he himself is one of the most tragically interesting characters in the cycle of the Reformation history.

With the fall of the Castle, then, but not till then, it became clear to all men that the Reformation would hold its ground. It was the final trampling out of the fire which for five years had threatened both England and Scotland with flames and ruin. For five years—

as late certainly as the massacre of St Bartholomew—those who understood best the true state of things, felt the keenest misgivings how the event would turn. That things ended as they did was due to the spirit of the Scotch commons. There was a moment when, if they had given way, all would have gone, perhaps even to Elizabeth's throne. They had passed for nothing; they had proved to be everything; had proved—the ultimate test in human things—to be the power which could hit the hardest blows, and they took rank accordingly. The creed began now in good earnest to make its way into hall and castle; but it kept the form which it assumed in the first hours of its danger and trial, and never after lost it. Had the aristocracy dealt sincerely with things in the earlier stages of the business, again I say the democratic element in the Kirk might have been softened or modified. But the Protestants had been trifled with by their own natural leaders. Used and abused by Elizabeth, despised by the worldly intelligence and power of the times—they triumphed after all, and, as a natural consequence, they set their own mark and stamp upon the fruits of the victory.

The question now is, what has the Kirk so established done for Scotland? Has it justified its own existence? Briefly, we might say, it has continued its first function as the guardian of Scottish freedom. But that is a vague phrase, and there are special accusations against the Kirk and its doctrines which imply that it has cared for other things than freedom. Narrow

fanatical, dictatorial, intrusive, superstitious, a spiritual despotism, the old priesthood over again with a new face—these and other such epithets and expressions we have heard often enough applied to it at more than one stage of its history. Well, I suppose that neither the Kirk nor anything else of man's making is altogether perfect. But let us look at the work which lay before it when it had got over its first perils. Scotch patriotism succeeded at last in the object it had so passionately set its heart upon. It sent a king at last of the Scotch blood to England, and a new dynasty; and it never knew peace or quiet after. The Kirk had stood between James Stuart and his kingcraft. He hated it as heartily as did his mother; and, when he got to England, he found people there who told him it would be easy to destroy it, and he found the strength of a fresh empire to back him in trying to do it. To have forced prelacy upon Scotland would have been to destroy the life out of Scotland. Thrust upon them by force, it would have been no more endurable than Popery. They would as soon, perhaps sooner, have had what the Irish call the 'rale thing' back again. The political freedom of the country was now wrapped up in the Kirk; and the Stuarts were perfectly well aware of that, and for that very reason began their crusade against it.

And now, suppose the Kirk had been the broad, liberal, philosophical, intellectual thing which some people think it ought to have been, how would it have fared in that crusade; how altogether would it have

encountered those surplices of Archbishop Laud or those dragoons of Claverhouse? It is hard to lose one's life for a 'perhaps,' and philosophical belief at the bottom means a 'perhaps,' and nothing more. For more than half the seventeenth century, the battle had to be fought out in Scotland, which in reality was the battle between liberty and despotism; and where, except in an intense, burning conviction that they were maintaining God's cause against the devil, could the poor Scotch people have found the strength for the unequal struggle which was forced upon them? Toleration is a good thing in its place; but you cannot tolerate what will not tolerate you, and is trying to cut your throat. Enlightenment you cannot have enough of, but it must be true enlightenment, which sees a thing in all its bearings. In these matters the vital questions are not always those which appear on the surface; and in the passion and resolution of brave and noble men there is often an inarticulate intelligence deeper than what can be expressed in words. Action sometimes will hit the mark, when the spoken word either misses it or is but half the truth. On such subjects, and with common men, latitude of mind means weakness of mind. There is but a certain quantity of spiritual force in any man. Spread it over a broad surface, the stream is shallow and languid; narrow the channel, and it becomes a driving force. Each may be well at its own time. The mill-race which drives the water-wheel is dispersed in rivulets over the meadow at its foot. The Covenanters fought the fight and won

the victory, and then, and not till then, came the David Humes with their essays on miracles, and the Adam Smiths with their political economies, and steam-engines, and railroads, and philosophical institutions, and all the blessed or unblessed fruits of liberty.

But we may go further. Institutions exist for men, not men for institutions; and the ultimate test of any system of politics, or body of opinions, or form of belief, is the effect produced on the conduct and condition of the people who live and die under them. Now, I am not here to speak of Scotland of the present day. That, happily, is no business of mine. We have to do here with Scotland before the march of intellect; with Scotland of the last two centuries; with the three or four hundred thousand families, who for half-a-score of generations believed simply and firmly in the principles of the Reformation, and walked in the ways of it.

Looked at broadly, one would say they had been an eminently pious people. It is part of the complaint of modern philosophers about them, that religion, or superstition, or whatever they please to call it, had too much to do with their daily lives. So far as one can look into that commonplace round of things which historians never tell us about, there have rarely been seen in this world a set of people who have thought more about right and wrong, and the judgment about them of the upper powers. Long-headed, thrifty industry, —a sound hatred of waste, imprudence, idleness, extravagance,—the feet planted firmly upon the earth,—

a conscientious sense that the worldly virtues are, nevertheless, very necessary virtues, that without these, honesty for one thing is not possible, and that without honesty no other excellence, religious or moral, is worth anything at all — this is the stuff of which Scotch life was made, and very good stuff it is. It has been called gloomy, austere, harsh, and such other epithets. A gifted modern writer has favoured us lately with long strings of extracts from the sermons of Scotch divines of the last century, taking hard views of human shortcomings and their probable consequences, and passing hard censures upon the world and its amusements. Well, no doubt amusement is a very good thing; but I should rather infer from the vehemence and frequency of these denunciations that the people had not been in the habit of denying themselves too immoderately; and, after all, it is no very hard charge against those teachers that they thought more of duty than of pleasure. Sermons always exaggerate the theoretic side of things; and the most austere preacher, when he is out of the pulpit, and you meet him at the dinner-table, becomes singularly like other people. We may take courage, I think, we may believe safely that in those minister-ridden days, men were not altogether so miserable; we may hope that no large body of human beings have for any length of time been too dangerously afraid of enjoyment. Among other good qualities, the Scots have been distinguished for humour—not for venomous wit, but for kindly, genial humour, which half loves what it laughs at—

and this alone shows clearly enough that those to whom it belongs have not looked too exclusively on the gloomy side of the world. I should rather say that the Scots had been an unusually happy people. Intelligent industry, the honest doing of daily work, with a sense that it must be done well, under penalties; the necessaries of life moderately provided for; and a sensible content with the situation of life in which men are born—this through the week, and at the end of it the 'Cottar's Saturday Night'—the homely family, gathered reverently and peacefully together, and irradiated with a sacred presence.—Happiness! such happiness as we human creatures are likely to know upon this world, will be found there, if anywhere.

The author of the 'History of Civilization' makes a naïve remark in connection with this subject. Speaking of the other country, which he censures equally with Scotland for its slavery to superstition, he says of the Spaniards that they are a well-natured, truthful, industrious, temperate, pious people, innocent in their habits, affectionate in their families, full of humour, vivacity, and shrewdness, yet that all this 'has availed them nothing'—'has availed them nothing,' that is his expression—because they are loyal, because they are credulous, because they are contented, because they have not apprehended the first commandment of the new covenant: 'Thou shalt get on and make money, and better thy condition in life;' because, therefore, they have added nothing to the scientific knowledge, the wealth, and the progress of mankind. Without these,

it seems, the old-fashioned virtues avail nothing. They avail a great deal to human happiness. Applied science, and steam, and railroads, and machinery, enable an ever-increasing number of people to live upon the earth; but the happiness of those people remains; so far as I know, dependent very much on the old conditions. I should be glad to believe that the new views of things will produce effects upon the character in the long run half so beautiful.

There is much more to say on this subject, were there time to say it, but I will not trespass too far upon your patience! and I would gladly have ended here, had not the mention of Spain suggested one other topic, which I should not leave unnoticed. The Spain of Cervantes and Don Quixote was the Spain of the Inquisition. The Scotland of Knox and Melville was the Scotland of the witch trials and witch burnings. The belief in witches was common to all the world. The prosecution and punishment of the poor creatures was more conspicuous in Scotland when the Kirk was most powerful; in England and New England, when Puritan principles were also dominant there. It is easy to understand the reasons. Evil of all kinds was supposed to be the work of a personal devil; and in the general horror of evil, this particular form of it, in which the devil was thought especially active, excited the most passionate detestation. Thus, even the best men lent themselves unconsciously to the most detestable cruelty. Knox himself is not free from reproach. A poor woman was burned at St Andrews when he was living there,

and when a word from him would have saved her. It remains a lesson to all time, that goodness, though the indispensable adjunct to knowledge, is no substitute for it; that when conscience undertakes to dictate beyond its province, the result is only the more monstrous.

It is well that we should look this matter in the face; and as particular stories leave more impression than general statements, I will mention one, perfectly well authenticated, which I take from the official report of the proceedings:—Towards the end of 1593 there was trouble in the family of the Earl of Orkney. His brother laid a plot to murder him, and was said to have sought the help of 'a notorious witch' called Alison Balfour. When Alison Balfour's life was looked into, no evidence could be found connecting her either with the particular offence or with witchcraft in general; but it was enough in these matters to be accused. She swore she was innocent; but her guilt was only held to be aggravated by perjury. She was tortured again and again. Her legs were put in the caschilaws—an iron frame which was gradually heated till it burned into the flesh—but no confession could be wrung from her. The caschilaws failed utterly, and something else had to be tried. She had a husband, a son, and a daughter, a child seven years old. As her own sufferings did not work upon her, she might be touched, perhaps, by the sufferings of those who were dear to her. They were brought into court, and placed at her side; and the husband first was placed in the 'lang irons'—some accursed instrument; I know not what. Still the devil

did not yield. She bore this; and her son was next operated on. The boy's legs were set in 'the boot,'—the iron boot you may have heard of. The wedges were driven in, which, when forced home, crushed the very bone and marrow. Fifty-seven mallet strokes were delivered upon the wedges. Yet this, too, failed. There was no confession yet. So, last of all, the little daughter was taken. There was a machine called the piniwinkies—a kind of thumbscrew, which brought blood from under the finger nails, with a pain successfully terrible. These things were applied to the poor child's hands, and the mother's constancy broke down, and she said she would admit anything they wished. She confessed her witchcraft—so tried, she would have confessed to the seven deadly sins—and then she was burned, recalling her confession, and with her last breath protesting her innocence.

It is due to the intelligence of the time to admit that after this her guilt was doubted, and such vicarious means of extorting confession do not seem to have been tried again. Yet the men who inflicted these tortures would have borne them all themselves sooner than have done any act which they consciously knew to be wrong. They did not know that the instincts of humanity were more sacred than the logic of theology, and in fighting against the devil they were themselves doing the devil's work. We should not attempt to apologize for these things, still less to forget them. No martyrs ever suffered to instil into mankind a more wholesome lesson—more wholesome, or one more hard to learn. The more

conscientious men are, the more difficult it is for them to understand that in their most cherished convictions, when they pass beyond the limits where the wise and good of all sorts agree, they may be the victims of mere delusion. Yet, after all, and happily, such cases were but few, and affected but lightly the general condition of the people.

The student running over the records of other times finds certain salient things standing out in frightful prominence. He concludes that the substance of those times was made up of the matters most dwelt on by the annalist. He forgets that the things most noticed are not those of every-day experience, but the abnormal, the extraordinary, the monstrous. The exceptions are noted down, the common and usual is passed over in silence. The philosophic historian, studying hereafter this present age, in which we are ourselves living, may say that it was a time of unexampled prosperity, luxury, and wealth; but catching at certain horrible murders which have lately disgraced our civilization, may call us a nation of assassins. It is to invert the pyramid and stand it on its point. The same system of belief which produced the tragedy which I have described, in its proper province as the guide of ordinary life, has been the immediate cause of all that is best and greatest in Scottish character.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CATHOLICISM.[1]

NOT long ago I heard a living thinker of some eminence say that he considered Christianity to have been a misfortune. Intellectually, he said, it was absurd; and practically, it was an offence, over which he stumbled. It would have been far better for mankind, he thought, if they could have kept clear of superstition, and followed on upon the track of the Grecian philosophy. So little do men care to understand the conditions which have made them what they are, and which has created for them that very wisdom in which they themselves are so contented. But it is strange, indeed, that a person who could deliberately adopt such a conclusion should trouble himself any more to look for truth. If a mere absurdity could make its way out of a village in Galilee, and spread through the whole civilized world; if men are so pitiably silly, that in an age of great mental activity their strongest thinkers should have

[1] From the *Leader*, 1851.

sunk under an abortion of fear and folly, should have allowed it to absorb into itself whatever of heroism, of devotion, self-sacrifice, and moral nobleness there was among them; surely there were nothing better for a wise man than to make the best of his time, and to crowd what enjoyment he can find into it, sheltering himself in a very disdainful Pyrrhonism from all care for mankind or for their opinions. For what better test of truth have we than the ablest men's acceptance of it? and if the ablest men eighteen centuries ago deliberately accepted what is now too absurd to reason upon, what right have we to hope that with the same natures, the same passions, the same understandings, no better proof against deception, we, like they, are not entangled in what, at the close of another era, shall seem again ridiculous? The scoff of Cicero at the divinity of Liber and Ceres (bread and wine) may be translated literally by the modern Protestant; and the sarcasms which Clement and Tertullian flung at the Pagan creed, the modern sceptic returns upon their own. Of what use is it to destroy an idol, when another, or the same in another form, takes immediate possession of the vacant pedestal?

I shall not argue with the extravagant hypothesis of my friend. In the opinion even of Goethe, who was not troubled with credulity, the human race can never attain to anything higher than Christianity—if we mean by Christianity the religion which was revealed to the world in the teaching and the life of its Founder. But even the more limited reprobation by our own Re-

formers of the creed of mediæval Europe is not more just or philosophical.

Ptolemy was not perfect, but Newton had been a fool if he had scoffed at Ptolemy. Newton could not have been without Ptolemy, nor Ptolemy without the Chaldees. And as it is with the minor sciences, so far more is it with the science of sciences—the science of life, which has grown through all the ages from the beginning of time. We speak of the errors of the past. We, with this glorious present which is opening on us, we shall never enter on it, we shall never understand it, till we have learnt to see in that past, not error, but instalment of truth, hard-fought-for truth, wrung out with painful and heroic effort. The promised land is smiling before us, but we may not pass over into the possession of it while the bones of our fathers who laboured through the wilderness lie bleaching on the sands, or a prey to the unclean birds. We must gather their relics and bury them, and sum up their labours, and inscribe the record of their actions on their tombs as an honourable epitaph. If Catholicism really is passing away, if it has done its work, and if what is left of it is now holding us back from better things, it is not for our bitterness but for our affectionate acknowledgment, nor for our heaping contempt on what it is, but for our reverent and patient examination of what it has been, that it will be content to bid us farewell, and give us God speed on our further journey.

In the Natural History of Religions, certain broad phenomena perpetually repeat themselves; they rise in

the highest thought extant at the time of their origin; the conclusions of philosophy settle into a creed; art ornaments it, devotion consecrates it, time elaborates it. It grows through a long series of generations into the heart and habits of the people; and so long as no disturbing cause interferes, or so long as the idea at the centre of it survives, a healthy, vigorous, natural life shoots beautifully up out of the intellectual root. But at last the idea becomes obsolete; the numbing influence of habit petrifies the spirit in the outside ceremonial, while new questions arise among the thinkers, and ideas enter into new and unexplained relations. The old formula will not serve; but new formulæ are tardy in appearing; and habit and superstition cling to the past, and policy vindicates it, and statecraft upholds it forcibly as serviceable to order, till from the combined action of folly, and worldliness, and ignorance, the once beautiful symbolism becomes at last no better than 'a whited sepulchre full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness.' So it is now. So it was in the era of the Cæsars, out of which Christianity arose; and Christianity, in the form which it assumed at the close of the Arian controversy, was the deliberate solution which the most powerful intellects of that day could offer of the questions which had grown with the growth of mankind, and on which Paganism had suffered shipwreck.

Paganism, as a creed, was entirely physical. When Paganism rose, men had not begun to reflect upon themselves, or the infirmities of their own nature. The

bad man was a bad man—the coward, a coward—the liar, a liar—individually hateful and despicable; but in hating and despising such unfortunates, the old Grecks were satisfied to have felt all that it was necessary to feel about them; and how such a phenomenon as a bad man came to exist in this world, they scarcely cared to inquire. There is no evil spirit in the mythology as an antagonist of the gods. There is the Erinnys as the avenger of monstrous villanies; there is a Tartarus where the darkest criminals suffer eternal tortures. But Tantalus and Ixion are suffering for enormous crimes, to which the small wickedness of common men offers no analogy. Moreover, these and other such stories are only curiously ornamented myths, representing physical phenomena. But with Socrates a change came over philosophy; a sign—perhaps a cause—of the decline of the existing religion. The study of man superseded the study of nature: a purer Theism came in with the higher ideal of perfection, and sin and depravity at once assumed an importance, the intensity of which made every other question insignificant. How man could know the good and yet choose the evil; how God could be all pure and almighty, and yet evil have broken into his creation—these were the questions which thenceforth were the perplexity of philosophic speculation.

Whatever difficulty there might be in discovering how evil came to be, the leaders of all the sects agreed at last upon the seat of it. Whether *matter* was eternal, as Aristotle thought, or created, as Plato thought, both

Plato and Aristotle were equally satisfied that the secret of all the shortcomings in this world lay in the imperfection, reluctancy, or inherent grossness of this impracticable substance. God would have everything perfect, but the nature of the element in which he worked in some way defeated his purpose. Death, disease, decay, clung necessarily to everything which was created out of it; and pain, and want, and hunger, and suffering. Worse than all, the spirit in its material body was opposed and borne down, its aspirations crushed, its purity tainted by the passions and appetites of its companion—the fleshly lusts which waged perpetual war against the soul.

Matter was the cause of evil, and thenceforth the question was how to conquer matter, or, at least, how to set free the spirit from its control.

The Greek language and the Greek literature spread behind the march of Alexander; but as his generals could only make their conquests permanent by largely accepting the Eastern manners, so philosophy could only make good its ground by becoming itself Orientalized. The one pure and holy God whom Plato had painfully reasoned out for himself had existed from immemorial time in the traditions of the Jews; while the Persians, who had before taught the Jews at Babylon the existence of an independent evil being, now had him to offer to the Greeks as their account of the difficulties which had perplexed Socrates. Seven centuries of struggle, and many hundred thousand folios, were the results of the remarkable fusion which followed

Out of these elements, united in various proportions, rose successively the Alexandrian philosophy, the Hellenists, the Therapeutæ, those strange Essene communists, with the innumerable sects of Gnostic or Christian heretics. Finally, the battle was limited to the two great rivals, under one or other of which the best of the remainder had ranged themselves—Manicheism and Catholic Christianity: Manicheism in which the Persian—Catholicism in which the Jewish—element most preponderated. It did not end till the close of the fifth century, and it ended then rather by arbitration than by a decided victory which either side could claim. The Church has yet to acknowledge how large a portion of its enemy's doctrines it incorporated through the mediation of Augustine before the field was surrendered to it. Let us trace something of the real bearings of this section of the world's Oriental history, which to so many moderns seems no better than an idle fighting over words and straws.

Facts witnessing so clearly that the especial strength of evil lay, as the philosophers had seen, in *matter*, it was so far a conclusion which both Jew and Persian were ready to accept; the naked Aristotelic view of it being most acceptable to the Persian, the Platonic to the Hellenistic Jew. But the purer theology of the Jew forced him to look for a solution of the question which Plato had left doubtful, and to explain how evil had crept into matter. He could not allow that what God had created could be of its own nature imperfect. God made it very good; some other cause had broken

in to spoil it. Accordingly, as before he had reduced the independent Arimanes, whose existence he had learnt at Babylon, into a subordinate spirit; so now, not questioning the facts of disease, of death, of pain, or of the infirmity of the flesh which the natural strength of the spirit was unable to resist, he accounted for them under the supposition that the first man had deliberately sinned, and by his sin had brought a curse upon the whole material earth, and upon all which was fashioned out of it. The earth was created pure and lovely—a garden of delight, loading itself of its own free accord with fruit and flower, and everything most exquisite and beautiful. No bird or beast of prey broke the eternal peace which reigned over its hospitable surface. In calm and quiet intercourse, the leopard lay down by the kid, the lion browsed beside the ox, and the corporeal frame of man, knowing neither decay nor death, nor unruly appetite, nor any change or infirmity, was pure as the immortal substance of the unfallen angels.

But with the fatal apple all this fair scene passed away, and creation as it seemed was hopelessly and irretrievably ruined. Adam sinned—no matter how, he sinned; the sin was the one terrible fact: moral evil was brought into the world by the only creature who was capable of committing it. Sin entered in, and death by sin; death and disease, storm and pestilence, earthquake and famine. The imprisoned passions of the wild animals were let loose, and earth and air became full of carnage: worst of all, man's animal

nature came out in gigantic strength—the carnal lusts, unruly appetites, jealousies, hatreds, rapines, and murders; and then the law, and with it, of course, breaches of the law, and sin on sin. The seed of Adam was infected in the animal change which had passed over Adam's person, and every child, therefore, thenceforth naturally engendered in his posterity, was infected with the curse which he had incurred. Every material organization thenceforward contained in itself the elements of its own destruction, and the philosophic conclusions of Aristotle were accepted and explained by theology. Already, in the popular histories, those who were infected by disease were said to be bound by Satan; madness was a 'possession' by the Evil Spirit; and the whole creation, from Adam till Christ, groaned and travailed under Satan's power. The nobler nature in man still made itself felt; but it was a slave when it ought to command. It might will to obey the higher law, but the law in the members was over-strong for it and bore it down. This was the body of death which philosophy detected but could not explain, and from which Catholicism now came forward with its magnificent promise of deliverance.

The carnal doctrine of the sacraments, which Protestants are compelled to acknowledge to have been taught as fully in the early Church as it is now taught by the Roman Catholics, has long been the stumbling-block to modern thought. It was the very essence of the original creed. Unless the body could be purified, the soul could not be saved; because from the begin-

ning, soul and flesh were one man and inseparable. Without his flesh, man was not, or would cease to be. But the natural organization of the flesh was infected with evil, and unless organization could begin again from a new original, no pure material substance could exist at all. He, therefore, by whom God had first made the world, entered into the womb of the Virgin in the form (if I may with reverence say so) of a new organic cell; and around it, through the virtue of His creative energy, a material body grew again of the substance of his mother, pure of taint and clean as the first body of the first man was clean when it passed out under His hand in the beginning of all things. In Him thus wonderfully born was the virtue which was to restore the lost power of mankind. He came to redeem man; and, therefore, He took a human body, and He kept it pure through a human life, till the time came when it could be applied to its marvellous purpose. He died, and then appeared what was the nature of a material human body when freed from the limitations of sin. The grave could not hold it, neither was it possible that it should see corruption. It was real, for the disciples were allowed to feel and handle it. He ate and drank with them to assure their senses. But space had no power over it, nor any of the material obstacles which limit an ordinary power. He willed and His body obeyed. He was here, He was there. He was visible, He was invisible. He was in the midst of His disciples and they saw Him, and then he was gone whither who could tell? At last He passed away to

heaven; but while in heaven, He was still on earth. His body became the body of His Church on earth, not in metaphor, but in fact!—His very material body, in which and by which the faithful would be saved. His flesh and blood were thenceforth to be their food. They were to eat it as they would eat ordinary meat. They were to take it into their system, a pure material substance, to leaven the old natural substance and assimilate it to itself. As they fed upon it it would grow into them, and it would become their own real body. Flesh grown in the old way was the body of death, but the flesh of Christ was the life of the world, over which death had no power. Circumcision availed nothing, nor uncircumcision—but a *new creature*—and this new creature, which the child first put on in baptism, was born again into Christ of water and the Spirit. In the Eucharist he was fed and sustained, and went on from strength to strength; and ever, as the nature of his body changed, being able to render a more complete obedience, he would at last pass away to God through the gate of the grave, and stand holy and perfect in the presence of Christ. Christ has indeed been ever present with him; but because while life lasts some particles of the old Adam will necessarily cling to every man, the Christian's mortal eye on earth cannot see Him. Hedged in by 'his muddy vesture of decay,' his eyes, like the eyes of the disciples of Emmaus, are holden, and only in faith he feels Him. But death, which till Christ had died had been the last victory of evil, in virtue of His submission to it, be-

comes its own destroyer, for it has power only over the tainted particles of the old substance, and there is nothing needed but that these should be washed away, and the elect will stand out at once pure and holy, clothed in immortal bodies, like refined gold, the redeemed of God.

The being who accomplished a work so vast—a work compared to which the first creation appears but a trifling difficulty—what could He be but God? God Himself! Who but God could have wrested his prize from a power which half the thinking world believed to be his coequal and coeternal adversary? He was God. He was man also, for He was the second Adam —the second starting-point of human growth. He was virgin born, that no original impurity might infect the substance which He assumed; and being Himself sinless, He showed, in the nature of His person, after his resurrection, what the material body would have been in all of us except for sin, and what it will be when, after feeding on it in its purity, the bodies of each of us are transfigured after its likeness.

Here was the secret of the spirit which set St Simeon on his pillar and sent St Anthony to the tombs —of the night watches, the weary fasts, the penitential scourgings, the life-long austerities which have been alternately the glory and the reproach of the mediæval saints. They desired to overcome their animal bodies, and anticipate in life the work of death in uniting themselves more completely to Christ by the destruction of the flesh, which lay as a veil between themselves and Him.

Such I believe to have been the central idea of the beautiful creed which, for 1500 years, tuned the heart and formed the mind of the noblest of mankind. From this centre it radiated out and spread as time went on, into the full circle of human activity, flinging its own philosophy and its own peculiar grace over the common details of the common life of all of us. Like the seven lamps before the throne of God, the seven mighty angels, and the seven stars, the seven sacraments shed over mankind a never-ceasing stream of blessed influences. The priests, a holy order set apart and endowed with mysterious power, represented Christ and administered His gifts. Christ, in his twelfth year, was presented in the Temple, and first entered on His Father's business; and the baptized child, when it has grown to an age to become conscious of its vow and of its privilege, again renews it in full knowledge of what it undertakes, and receives again sacramentally a fresh gift of grace to assist it forward on its way. In maturity it seeks a companion to share its pains and pleasures; and, again, Christ is present to consecrate the union. Marriage, which, outside the Church, only serves to perpetuate the curse and bring fresh inheritors of misery into the world, He made holy by His presence at Cana, and chose it as the symbol to represent His own mystic union with His Church. Even saints cannot live without at times some spot adhering to them. The atmosphere in which we breathe and move is soiled, and Christ has anticipated our wants. Christ did penance forty days in the wilderness, not to subdue

His own flesh—for that which was already perfect did not need subduing—but to give to penance a cleansing virtue to serve for our daily or our hourly ablution. Christ consecrates our birth; Christ throws over us our baptismal robe of pure unsullied innocence. He strengthens us as we go forward. He raises us when we fall. He feeds us with the substance of His own most precious body. In the person of His minister he does all this for us, in virtue of that which in His own person He actually performed when a man living on this earth. Last of all, when time is drawing to its close with us—when life is past, when the work is done, and the dark gate is near, beyond which the garden of an eternal home is waiting to receive us, His tender care has not forsaken us. He has taken away the sting of death, but its appearance is still terrible: and He will not leave us without special help at our last need. He tried the agony of the moment; and He sweetens the cup for us before we drink it. We are dismissed to the grave with our bodies anointed with oil, which He made holy in His last anointing before His passion, and then all is over. We lie down and seem to decay—to decay—but not all. Our natural body decays, being the last remains of the infected matter which we have inherited from Adam: but the spiritual body, the glorified substance which has made our life, and is our real body as we are in Christ, that can never decay, but passes off into the kingdom which is prepared for it; that other world where there is no sin, and God is all and in all!

A PLEA FOR THE FREE DISCUSSION OF THEOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES.[1]

IN the ordinary branches of human knowledge or inquiry, the judicious questioning of received opinions has been regarded as the sign of scientific vitality, the principle of scientific advancement, the very source and root of healthy progress and growth. If medicine had been regulated three hundred years ago by Act of Parliament; if there had been Thirty-nine Articles of Physic, and every licensed practitioner had been compelled, under pains and penalties, to compound his drugs by the prescriptions of Henry the Eighth's physician, Doctor Butts, it is easy to conjecture in what state of health the people of this country would at present be found. Constitutions have changed with habits of life, and the treatment of disorders has changed to meet the new conditions. New diseases have shown themselves of which Doctor

[1] *Fraser's Magazine*, 1863.

Butts had no cognizance; new continents have given us plants with medicinal virtues previously unheard of; new sciences, and even the mere increase of recorded experience, have added a thousand remedies to those known to the age of the Tudors. If the College of Physicians had been organized into a board of orthodoxy, and every novelty of treatment had been regarded as a crime against society, which a law had been established to punish, the hundreds who die annually from preventible causes would have been thousands and tens of thousands.

Astronomy is the most perfect of the sciences. The accuracy of the present theory of the planetary movements is tested daily and hourly by the most delicate experiments, and the Legislature, if it so pleased, might enact the first principles of these movements into a statute, without danger of committing the law of England to falsehood. Yet, if the Legislature were to venture on any such paternal procedure, in a few years gravitation itself would be called in question, and the whole science would wither under the fatal shadow. There are many phenomena still unexplained to give plausibility to scepticism; there are others more easily formularized for working purposes in the language of Hipparchus; and there would be reactionists who would invite us to return to the safe convictions of our forefathers. What the world has seen the world may see again; and were it once granted that astronomy were something to be ruled by authority, new popes would imprison new Galileos; the

knowledge already acquired would be strangled in the cords which were intended to keep it safe from harm, and, deprived of the free air on which its life depends, it would dwindle and die.

A few years ago, an Inspector of Schools—a Mr Jellinger Symonds—opening, perhaps for the first time, an elementary book on astronomy, came on something which he conceived to be a difficulty in the theory of lunar motion. His objection was on the face of it plausible. The true motions of the heavenly bodies are universally the opposite of the apparent motions. Mr Symonds conceived that the moon could not revolve on its axis, because the same side of it was continually turned towards the earth; and because if it were connected with the earth by a rigid bar—which, as he thought, would deprive it of power of rotation—the relative aspects of the two bodies would remain unchanged. He sent his views to the 'Times.' He appealed to the common sense of the world, and common sense seemed to be on his side. The men of science were of course right; but a phenomenon, not entirely obvious, had been hitherto explained in language which the general reader could not readily comprehend. A few words of elucidation cleared up the confusion. We do not recollect whether Mr Symonds was satisfied or not; but most of us who had before received what the men of science told us with an unintelligent and languid assent, were set thinking for ourselves, and, as a result of the discussion, exchanged a confused idea for a clear one.

It was an excellent illustration of the true claims of authority and of the value of open inquiry. The ignorant man has not as good a right to his own opinion as the instructed man. The instructed man, however right he may be, must not deliver his conclusions as axioms, and merely insist that they are true. The one asks a question, the other answers it, and all of us are the better for the business.

Now, let us suppose the same thing to have happened when the only reply to a difficulty was an appeal to the Astronomer-Royal, where the rotation of the moon was an article of salvation decreed by the law of the land, and where all persons admitted to hold office under the State were required to subscribe to it. The Astronomer-Royal—as it was, if we remember right, he was a little cross at Mr Symonds' presumption—would have brought an action against him in the Court of Arches; Mr Symonds would have been deprived of his inspectorship—for, of course, he would have been obstinate in his heresy; the world outside would have had an antecedent presumption that truth lay with the man who was making sacrifices for it, and that there was little to be said in the way of argument for what could not stand without the help of the law. Everybody could understand the difficulty; not everybody would have taken the trouble to attend to the answer. Mr Symonds would have been a Colenso, and a good many of us would have been convinced in our secret hearts that the moon as little turned on its axis as the drawing-room table.

As it is in idea essential to a reverence for truth to

believe in its capacity for self-defence, so practically, in every subject except one, errors are allowed free room to express themselves, and the liberty of opinion which is the life of knowledge, as surely becomes the death of falsehood. A method—the soundness of which is so evident that to argue in favour of it is almost absurd—might be expected to have been applied, as a matter of course, to the one subject where mistake is supposed to be fatal,—where to come to wrong conclusions is held to be a crime for which the Maker of the universe has neither pardon nor pity. Yet many reasons, not difficult to understand, have long continued to exclude theology from the region where free discussion is supposed to be applicable. That so many persons have a personal interest in the maintenance of particular views, would of itself be fatal to fair argument. Though they know themselves to be right, yet right is not enough for them unless there is might to support it, and those who talk most of faith show least that they possess it. But there are deeper and more subtle objections. The theologian requires absolute certainty, and there are no absolute certainties in science. The conclusions of science are never more than in a high degree probable; they are no more than the best explanations of phenomena which are attainable in the existing state of knowledge. The most elementary laws are called laws only in courtesy. They are generalizations which are not considered likely to require modification, but which no one pretends to be in the nature of the cause exhaustively and ultimately true. As phenomena become

more complicated, and the data for the interpretation of them more inadequate, the explanations offered are put forward hypothetically, and are graduated by the nature of the evidence. Such modest hesitation is altogether unsuited to the theologian, whose certainty increases with the mystery and obscurity of his matter; his convictions admit of no qualification; his truth is sure as the axioms of geometry; he knows what he believes, for he has the evidence in his heart; if he inquire, it is with a foregone conclusion, and serious doubt with him is sin. It is in vain to point out to him the thousand forms of opinions for each of which the same internal witness is affirmed. The Mayo peasant crawling with bare knees over the splintered rocks on Croagh Patrick, the nun prostrate before the image of St Mary, the Methodist in the spasmodic ecstasy of a revival, alike are conscious of emotions in themselves which correspond to their creed: the more passionate, or—as some would say—the more unreasoning the piety, the louder and more clear is the voice within. But these varieties are no embarrassment to the theologian. He finds no fault with the method which is identical in them all. Whatever the party to which he himself belongs, he is equally satisfied that he alone has the truth; the rest are under illusions of Satan.

Again, we hear—or we used to hear when the High Church party were more formidable than they are at present—much about 'the right of private judgment.' 'Why,' the eloquent Protestant would say, 'should I

pin my faith upon the Church; the Church is but a congregation of fallible men, no better able to judge than I am; I have a right to my own opinion.' It sounds like a paradox to say that free discussion is interfered with by a cause which, above all others, would have been expected to further it; but this in fact has been the effect, because it tends to remove the grounds of theological belief beyond the province of argument. No one talks of 'a right of private judgment' in anything but religion; no one but a fool insists on his 'right to his own opinion' with his lawyer or his doctor. Able men who have given their time to special subjects, are authorities upon those subjects to be listened to with deference, and the ultimate authority at any given time is the collective general sense of the wisest men living in the department to which they belong. The utmost 'right of private judgment' which anybody claims in such cases, is the choice of the physician to whom he will trust his body, or of the counsel to whom he will commit the conduct of his cause. The expression, as it is commonly used, implies a belief that, in matters of religion, the criteria of truth are different in kind from what prevail elsewhere, and the efforts which have been made to bring such a notion into harmony with common sense and common subjects have not been the least successful. The High Church party used to say, as a point against the Evangelicals, that either, 'the right of private judgment' meant nothing, or it meant that a man had a right to be in the wrong. 'No,' said a writer in the

'Edinburgh Review,' 'it means only that if a man chooses to be in the wrong, no one else has a right to interfere with him. A man has no right to get drunk in his own house, but the policeman may not force a way into his house and prevent him.' The illustration fails of its purpose.

In the first place, the Evangelicals never contemplated a wrong use of the thing; they meant merely that they had a right to their own opinions as against the Church. They did not indeed put forward their claim quite so nakedly; they made it general, as sounding less invidious; but nobody ever heard an Evangelical admit a High Churchman's right to be a High Churchman, or a Catholic's right to be a Catholic.

But secondly, society has a most absolute right to prevent all manner of evil—drunkenness and the rest of it, if it can—only in doing so, society must not use means which would create a greater evil than it would remedy. As a man can by no possibility be doing anything but most foul wrong to himself in getting drunk, society does him no wrong, but rather does him the greatest benefit, if it can possibly keep him sober; and in the same way, since a false belief in serious matters is among the greatest of misfortunes, so to drive it out of man, by the whip, if it cannot be managed by persuasion, is an act of brotherly love and affection, provided the belief really and truly is false, and you have a better to give him in the place of it. The question is not what to do, but merely 'how to do it;' although Mr Mill, in his love of 'liberty,' thinks other

wise. Mr Mill demands for every man a right to say out his convictions in plain language, whatever they may be; and so far as he means that there should be no Act of Parliament to prevent him, he is perfectly just in what he says. But when Mr Mill goes from Parliament to public opinion—when he lays down as a general principle that the free play of thought is unwholesomely interfered with by society, he would take away the sole protection which we possess from the inroads of any kind of folly. His dread of tyranny is so great, that he thinks a man better off with a false opinion of his own than with a right opinion inflicted upon him from without; while, for our own part, we should be grateful for tyranny or for anything else which would perform so useful an office for us.

Public opinion may be unjust at particular times and on particular subjects; we believe it to be both unjust and unwise on the matter of which we are at present speaking: but, on the whole, it is like the ventilation of a house, which keeps the air pure. Much in this world has to be taken for granted, and we cannot be for ever arguing over our first principles. If a man persists in talking of what he does not understand, he is put down; if he sports loose views on morals at a decent dinner party, the better sort of people fight shy of him, and he is not invited again; if he profess himself a Buddhist or a Mahometan, it is assumed that he has not adopted those beliefs on serious conviction, but rather in wilful levity and eccentricity which does not deserve to be tolerated. Men have no right to make

themselves bores and nuisances; and the common sense of mankind inflicts wholesome inconveniences on those who carry their 'right of private judgment' to any such extremities. It is a check, the same in kind as that which operates so wholesomely in the sciences. Mere folly is extinguished in contempt; objections reasonably urged obtain a hearing and are reasonably met. New truths, after encountering sufficient opposition to test their value, make their way into general reception.

A further cause which has operated to prevent theology from obtaining the benefit of free discussion is the interpretation popularly placed upon the constitution of the Church Establishment. For fifteen centuries of its existence, the Christian Church was supposed to be under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit, which miraculously controlled its decisions, and precluded the possibility of error. This theory broke down at the Reformation, but it left behind it a confused sense that theological truth was in some way different from other truth; and, partly on grounds of public policy, partly because it was supposed to have succeeded to the obligations and the rights of the Papacy, the State took upon itself to fix by statute the doctrines which should be taught to the people. The distractions created by divided opinions were then dangerous. Individuals did not hesitate to ascribe to themselves the infallibility which they denied to the Church. Everybody was intolerant upon principle, and was ready to cut the throat of an opponent whom

his arguments had failed to convince. The State, while it made no pretensions to Divine guidance, was compelled to interfere in self-protection; and to keep the peace of the realm, and to prevent the nation from tearing itself in pieces, a body of formulas was enacted, for the time broad and comprehensive, within which opinion might be allowed convenient latitude, while forbidden to pass beyond the border.

It might have been thought that in abandoning for itself, and formally denying to the Church, its pretensions to immunity from error, the State could not have intended to bind the conscience. When this or that law is passed, the subject is required to obey it, but he is not required to approve of the law as just. The Prayer-Book and the Thirty-nine Articles, so far as they are made obligatory by Act of Parliament, are as much laws as any other statute. They are a rule to conduct; it is not easy to see why they should be more; it is not easy to see why they should have been supposed to deprive clergymen of a right to their opinions, or to forbid discussion of their contents. The judge is not forbidden to ameliorate the law which he administers. If in discharge of his duty he has to pronounce a sentence which he declares at the same time that he thinks unjust, no indignant public accuses him of dishonesty, or requires him to resign his office. The soldier is asked no questions as to the legitimacy of the war on which he is sent to fight; nor need he throw up his commission if he think the quarrel a bad one. Doubtless, if a law was utterly iniquitous—if a

war was unmistakably wicked—honourable men might feel uncertain what to do, and would seek some other profession rather than continue instruments of evil. But within limits, and in questions of detail, where the service is generally good and honourable, we leave opinion its free play, and exaggerated scrupulousness would be folly or something worse. Somehow or other however, this wholesome freedom is not allowed to the clergymen. The idea of absolute inward belief has been substituted for that of obedience; and the man who, in taking orders, signs the Articles and accepts the Prayer-Book, does not merely undertake to use the services in the one, and abstain from contradicting to his congregation the doctrines contained in the other; but he is held to promise what no honest man, without presumption, can undertake to promise—that he will continue to think to the end of his life as he thinks when he makes his engagement.

It is said that if his opinions change, he may resign, and retire into lay communion. We are not prepared to say that either the Convocation of 1562, or the Parliament which afterwards endorsed its proceedings, knew exactly what they meant, or did not mean; but it is quite clear that they did not contemplate the alternative of a clergyman's retirement. If they had, they would have provided means by which he could have abandoned his orders, and not have remained committed for life to a profession from which he could not escape. If the popular theory of subscription be true, and the Articles are articles of belief, a reasonable human being,

when little more than a boy, pledges himself to a long series of intricate and highly-difficult propositions of abstruse divinity. He undertakes never to waver or doubt—never to allow his mind to be shaken, whatever the weight of argument or evidence brought to bear upon him. That is to say, he promises to do what no man living has a right to promise to do. He is doing, on the authority of Parliament, precisely what the Church of Rome required him to do on the authority of a Council.

If a clergyman—in trouble amidst the abstruse subjects with which he has to deal, or unable to reconcile some new-discovered truth of science with the established formulas—puts forward his perplexities; if he ventures a doubt of the omniscience of the statesmen and divines of the sixteenth century, which they themselves disowned, there is an instant cry to have him stifled, silenced, or trampled down; and if no longer punished in life and limb, to have him deprived of the means on which life and limb can be supported, while with ingenious tyranny he is forbidden to maintain himself by any other occupation.

So far have we gone in this direction, that when the 'Essays and Reviews' appeared, it was gravely said —and said by men who had no professional antipathy to them—that the writers had broken their faith. Laymen were free to say what they pleased on such subjects; clergymen were the hired exponents of the established opinions, and were committed to them in thought and word. It was one more anomaly where

there were enough already. To say that the clergy, who are set apart to study a particular subject, are to be the only persons unpermitted to have an independent opinion upon it, is like saying that lawyers must take no part in the amendment of the statute-book; that engineers must be silent upon mechanism; and if an improvement is wanted in the art of medicine, physicians may have nothing to say to it.

These causes would, perhaps, have been insufficient to repress free inquiry, if there had been on the part of the really able men among us a determination to break the ice; in other words, if theology had preserved the same commanding interest for the more powerful minds with which it affected them three hundred years ago. But on the one hand, a sense, half serious, half languid, of the hopelessness of the subject has produced an indisposition to meddle with it; on the other, there has been a creditable reluctance to disturb by discussion the minds of the uneducated or half-educated, to whom the established religion is simply an expression of the obedience which they owe to Almighty God, on the details of which they think little, and are therefore unconscious of its difficulties, while in general it is the source of all that is best and noblest in their lives and actions.

This last motive no doubt deserves respect, but the force which it once possessed it possesses no longer. The uncertainty which once affected only the more instructed extends now to all classes of society. A superficial crust of agreement, wearing thinner day by

day, is undermined everywhere by a vague misgiving; and there is an unrest which will be satisfied only when the sources of it are probed to the core. The Church authorities repeat a series of phrases which they are pleased to call answers to objections; they treat the most serious grounds of perplexity as if they were puerile and trifling; while it is notorious that for a century past extremely able men have either not known what to say about them, or have not said what they thought. On the Continent the peculiar English view has scarcely a single educated defender. Even in England the laity keep their judgment in suspense, or remain warily silent.

'Of what religion are you, Mr Rogers?' said a lady once.

'What religion, madam? I am of the religion of all sensible men.'

'And what is that?' she asked.

'All sensible men, madam, keep that to themselves.'

If Mr Rogers had gone on to explain himself, he would have said, perhaps, that where the opinions of those best able to judge are divided, the questions at issue are doubtful. Reasonable men who are unable to give them special attention withhold their judgment, while those who are able, form their conclusions with diffidence and modesty. But theologians will not tolerate diffidence; they demand absolute assent, and will take nothing short of it; and they affect, therefore, to drown in foolish ridicule whatever troubles or displeases them. The Bishop of Oxford talks in the old style of

punishment. The Archbishop of Canterbury refers us to Usher as our guide in Hebrew chronology. The objections of the present generation of 'infidels,' he says, are the same which have been refuted again and again, and are such as a child might answer. The young man just entering upon the possession of his intellect, with a sense of responsibility for his belief, and more anxious for truth than for success in life, finds, when he looks into the matter, that the Archbishop has altogether misrepresented it; that in fact, like other official persons, he had been using merely a stereotyped form of words, to which he attached no definite meaning. The words are repeated year after year, but the enemies refuse to be exorcised. They come and come again, from Spinoza and Lessing to Strauss and Renan. The theologians have resolved no single difficulty; they convince no one who is not convinced already; and a Colenso coming fresh to the subject with no more than a year's study, throws the Church of England into convulsions.

If there were any real danger that Christianity would cease to be believed, it would be no more than a fulfilment of prophecy. The state in which the Son of Man would find the world at his coming he did not say would be a state of faith. But if that dark time is ever literally to come upon the earth, there are no present signs of it. The creed of eighteen centuries is not about to fade away like an exhalation, nor are the new lights of science so exhilarating that serious persons can look with comfort to exchanging one for the other.

Christianity has abler advocates than its professed defenders, in those many quiet and humble men and women who in the light of it and the strength of it live holy, beautiful, and self-denying lives. The God that answers by fire is the God whom mankind will acknowledge; and so long as the fruits of the Spirit continue to be visible in charity, in self-sacrifice, in those graces which raise human creatures above themselves, and invest them with that beauty of holiness which only religion confers, thoughtful persons will remain convinced that with them in some form or other is the secret of truth. The body will not thrive on poison, or the soul on falsehood; and as the vital processes of health are too subtle for science to follow; as we choose our food, not by the most careful chemical analysis, but by the experience of its effects upon the system; so when a particular belief is fruitful in nobleness of character, we need trouble ourselves very little with scientific demonstrations that it is false. The most deadly poison may be chemically undistinguishable from substances which are perfectly innocent.

What that belief is for which the fruits speak thus so positively, it is less easy to divine. Religion from the beginning of time has expanded and changed with the growth of knowledge. The religion of the prophets was not the religion which was adapted to the hardness of heart of the Israelites of the Exodus. The Gospel set aside the Law; the creed of the early Church was not the creed of the Middle Ages, any more than the creed of Luther and Cranmer was the creed of St

Bernard and Aquinas. Old things pass away, new things come in their place; and they in their turn grow old, and give place to others; yet in each of the many forms which Christianity has assumed in the world, holy men have lived and died, and have had the witness of the Spirit that they were not far from the truth. It may be that the faith which saves is the something held in common by all sincere Christians, and by those as well who should come from the east and the west, and sit down in the kingdom of God, when the children of the covenant would be cast out. It may be that the true teaching of our Lord is overlaid with doctrines; and theology, when insisting on the reception of its huge catena of formulas, may be binding a yoke upon our necks which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear.

But it is not the object of this paper to put forward either this or any other particular opinion. The writer is conscious only that he is passing *fast* towards the dark gate which soon will close behind him. He believes that some kind of sincere and firm conviction on these things is of *infinite* moment to him, and, entirely diffident of his own power to find his way towards such a conviction, he is both ready and anxious to disclaim 'all right of private judgment' in the matter. He wishes only to learn from those who are able to teach him. The learned prelates talk of the presumptuousness of human reason; they tell us that doubts arise from the consciousness of sin and the pride of the unregenerate heart. The present writer, while he believes generally

that reason, however inadequate, is the best faculty to which we have to trust, yet is most painfully conscious of the weakness of his own reason; and once let the real judgment of the best and wisest men be declared —let those who are most capable of forming a sound opinion, after reviewing the whole relations of science, history, and what is now received as revelation, tell us fairly how much of the doctrines popularly taught they conceive to be adequately established, how much to be uncertain, and how much, if anything, to be mistaken; there is scarcely, perhaps, a single serious inquirer who would not submit with delight to a court which is the highest on earth.

Mr Mansel tells us that in the things of God reason is beyond its depth, that the wise and the unwise are on the same level of incapacity, and that we must accept what we find established, or we must believe nothing. We presume that Mr Mansel's dilemma itself is a conclusion of reason. Do what we will, reason is and must be our ultimate authority; and were the collective sense of mankind to declare Mr Mansel right, we should submit to that opinion as readily as to another. But the collective sense of mankind is less acquiescent. He has been compared to a man sitting on the end of a plank and deliberately sawing off his seat. It seems never to have occurred to him that, if he is right, he has no business to be a Protestant. What Mr Mansel says to Professor Jowett, Bishop Gardiner in effect replied to Frith and Ridley. Frith and Ridley said that transubstantiation was unreasonable; Gardiner

answered that there was the letter of Scripture for it, and that the human intellect was no measure of the power of God. Yet the Reformers somehow believed, and Mr Mansel by his place in the Church of England seems to agree with them, that the human intellect was not so wholly incompetent. It might be a weak guide, but it was better than none; and they declared on grounds of mere reason, that Christ being in heaven and not on earth, 'it was contrary to the truth for a natural body to be in two places at once.' The common sense of the country was of the same opinion, and the illusion was at an end.

There have been 'Aids to Faith' produced lately, and 'Replies to the Seven Essayists,' 'Answers to Colenso,' and much else of the kind. We regret to say that they have done little for us. The very life of our souls is at issue in the questions which have been raised, and we are fed with the professional commonplaces of the members of a close guild, men holding high office in the Church, or expecting to hold high office there; in either case with a strong temporal interest in the defence of the institution which they represent. We desire to know what those of the clergy think whose love of truth is unconnected with their prospects in life; we desire to know what the educated laymen, the lawyers, the historians, the men of science, the statesmen think; and these are for the most part silent, or confess themselves modestly uncertain. The professional theologians alone are loud and confident; but they speak in the old angry tone which rarely

accompanies deep and wise convictions. They do not meet the real difficulties; they mistake them, misrepresent them, claim victories over adversaries with whom they have never even crossed swords, and leap to conclusions with a precipitancy at which we can only smile. It has been the unhappy manner of their class from immemorial time; they call it zeal for the Lord, as if it were beyond all doubt that they were on God's side—as if serious inquiry after truth was something which they were entitled to resent. They treat intellectual difficulties as if they deserved rather to be condemned and punished than considered and weighed, and rather stop their ears and run with one accord upon any one who disagrees with them than listen patiently to what he has to say.

We do not propose to enter in detail upon the particular points which demand re-discussion. It is enough that the more exact habit of thought which science has engendered, and the closer knowledge of the value and nature of evidence, has notoriously made it necessary that the grounds should be reconsidered on which we are to believe that one country and one people was governed for sixteen centuries on principles different from those which we now find to prevail universally. One of many questions however shall be briefly glanced at, on which the real issue seems habitually to be evaded.

Much has been lately said and written on the authenticity of the Pentateuch and the other historical books of the Old Testament. The Bishop of Natal has

thrown out in a crude form the critical results of the inquiries of the Germans, coupled with certain arithmetical calculations, for which he has a special aptitude. He supposes himself to have proved that the first five books of the Bible are a compilation of uncertain date, full of inconsistencies and impossibilities. The apologists have replied that the objections are not absolutely conclusive, that the events described in the Book of Exodus might possibly, under certain combinations of circumstances, have actually taken place; and they then pass to the assumption that because a story is not necessarily false, therefore it is necessarily true. We have no intention of vindicating Dr Colenso. His theological training makes his arguments very like those of his opponents, and he and Dr M'Caul may settle their differences between themselves. The question is at once wider and simpler than any which has been raised in that controversy. Were it proved beyond possibility of error that the Pentateuch was written by Moses, that those and all the books of the Old and New Testaments were really the work of the writers whose names they bear; were the Mosaic cosmogony in harmony with physical discoveries; and were the supposed inconsistencies and contradictions shown to have no existence except in Dr Colenso's imagination—we should not have advanced a single step towards making good the claim put forward for the Bible, that it is absolutely and unexceptionably true in all its parts. The 'genuineness and authenticity argument is irrelevant and needless. The clearest demon-

stration of the human authorship of the Pentateuch proves nothing about its immunity from errors. If there are no mistakes in it, it was not the workmanship of man; and if it was inspired by the Holy Spirit there is no occasion to show that the hand of Moses was the instrument made use of. To the most excellent of contemporary histories, to histories written by eye-witnesses of the facts which they describe, we accord but a limited confidence. The highest intellectual competence, the most admitted truthfulness, immunity from prejudice, and the absence of temptation to misstate the truth; these things may secure great credibility, but they are no guarantee for minute and circumstantial exactness. Two historians, though with equal gifts and equal opportunities, never describe events in exactly the same way. Two witnesses in a court of law, while they agree in the main, invariably differ in some particulars. It appears as if men could not relate facts precisely as they saw or as they heard them. The different parts of a story strike different imaginations unequally; and the mind, as the circumstances pass through it, alters their proportions unconsciously, or shifts the perspective. The credit which we give to the most authentic work of a man has no resemblance to that universal acceptance which is demanded for the Bible. It is not a difference of degree: it is a difference in kind; and we desire to know on what ground this infallibility, which we do not question, but which is not proved, demands our belief. Very likely, the Bible is thus infallible. Unless

it is, there can be no moral obligation to accept the facts which it records; and though there may be intellectual error in denying them, there can be no moral sin. Facts may be better or worse authenticated; but all the proofs in the world of the genuineness and authenticity of the human handiwork cannot establish a claim upon the conscience. It might be foolish to question Thucydides' account of Pericles, but no one would call it sinful. Men part with all sobriety of judgment when they come on ground of this kind. When Sir Henry Rawlinson read the name of Sennacherib on the Assyrian marbles, and found allusions there to the Israelites in Palestine, we were told that a triumphant answer had been found to the cavils of sceptics, and a convincing proof of the inspired truth of the Divine Oracles. Bad arguments in a good cause are a sure way to bring distrust upon it. The Divine Oracles may be true, and may be inspired; but the discoveries at Nineveh certainly do not prove them so. No one supposes that the Books of Kings or the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezekiel were the work of men who had no knowledge of Assyria or the Assyrian Princes. It is possible that in the excavations at Carthage some Punic inscription may be found confirming Livy's account of the battle of Cannæ; but we shall not be obliged to believe therefore in the inspiration of Livy, or rather (for the argument comes to that) in the inspiration of the whole Latin literature.

We are not questioning the fact that the Bible is infallible; we desire only to be told on what evidence

that great and awful fact concerning it properly rests. It would seem, indeed, as if instinct had been wiser than argument—as if it had been felt that nothing short of this literal and close inspiration could preserve the facts on which Christianity depends. The history of the early world is a history everywhere of marvels. The legendary literature of every nation upon earth tells the same stories of prodigies and wonders, of the appearances of the gods upon earth, and of their intercourse with men. The lives of the saints of the Catholic Church, from the time of the Apostles till the present day, are a complete tissue of miracles resembling and rivalling those of the Gospels. Some of these stories are romantic and imaginative; some clear, literal, and prosaic; some rest on mere tradition; some on the sworn testimony of eye-witnesses; some are obvious fables; some are as well authenticated as facts of such a kind can be authenticated at all. The Protestant Christian rejects every one of them—rejects them without inquiry—involves those for which there is good authority and those for which there is none or little in one absolute, contemptuous, and sweeping denial. The Protestant Christian feels it more likely, in the words of Hume, that men should deceive or be deceived, than that the laws of nature should be violated. At this moment we are beset with reports of conversations with spirits, of tables miraculously lifted, of hands projected out of the world of shadows into this mortal life. An unusually able, accomplished person, accustomed to deal with common-sense facts, a

celebrated political economist, and notorious for business-like habits, assured this writer that a certain mesmerist, who was my informant's intimate friend, had raised a dead girl to life. We should believe the people who tell us these things in any ordinary matter: they would be admitted in a court of justice as good witnesses in a criminal case, and a jury would hang a man on their word. The person just now alluded to is incapable of telling a wilful lie; yet our experience of the regularity of nature on one side is so uniform, and our experience of the capacities of human folly on the other is so large, that when people tell us these wonderful stories, most of us are contented to smile! and we do not care so much as to turn out of our way to examine them.

The Bible is equally a record of miracles; but as from other histories we reject miracles without hesitation, so of those in the Bible we insist on the universal acceptance: the former are all false, the latter are all true. It is evident that, in forming conclusions so sweeping as these, we cannot even suppose that we are being guided by what is called historical evidence. Were it admitted that, as a whole, the miracles of the Bible are better authenticated than the miracles of the saints, we should be far removed still from any large inference, that in the one set there is no room for falsehood, in the other no room for truth. The writer or writers of the Books of Kings are not known. The books themselves are in fact confessedly taken from older writings which are lost; and the accounts of the great

prophets of Israel are a counterpart, curiously like, of those of the mediæval saints. In many instances, the authors of the Lives of these saints were their companions and friends. Why do we feel so sure that what we are told of Elijah or Elisha took place exactly as we read it? Why do we reject the account of St Columba or St Martin as a tissue of idle fable? Why should not God give a power to the saint which He had given to the prophet? We can produce no reason from the nature of things, for we know not what the nature of things is; and if down to the death of the Apostles the ministers of religion were allowed to prove their commission by working miracles, what right have we, on grounds either of history or philosophy, to draw a clear line at the death of St John—to say that before that time all such stories were true, and after it all were false?

There is no point on which Protestant controversialists evade the real question more habitually than on that of miracles. They accuse those who withhold that unreserved and absolute belief which they require for all which they accept themselves, of denying that miracles are possible. They assume this to be the position taken up by the objector, and proceed easily to argue that man is no judge of the power of God. Of course he is not. No sane man ever raised his narrow understanding into a measure of the possibilities of the universe; nor does any person with any pretensions to religion disbelieve in miracles of some kind. To pray is to expect a miracle. When we pray for the recovery

of a sick friend, for the gift of any blessing, or the removal of any calamity, we expect that God will do something by an act of His personal will which otherwise would not have been done—that He will suspend the ordinary relations of natural cause and effect; and this is the very idea of a miracle. The thing we pray for may be given us, and no miracle may have taken place. It may be given to us by natural causes, and would have occurred whether we had prayed or not. But prayer itself in its very essence implies a belief in the possible intervention of a power which is above nature. The question about miracles is simply one of evidence—whether in any given case the proof is so strong that no room is left for mistake, exaggeration, or illusion, while more evidence is required to establish a fact antecedently improbable than is sufficient for a common occurrence.

It has been said recently by 'A Layman,' in a letter to Mr Maurice, that the resurrection of our Lord is as well authenticated as the death of Julius Cæsar. It is far better authenticated, unless we are mistaken in supposing the Bible inspired; or if we admit as evidence that inward assurance of the Christian, which would make him rather die than disbelieve a truth so dear to him. But if the layman meant that there was as much proof of it, in the sense in which proof is understood in a court of justice, he could scarcely have considered what he was saying. Julius Cæsar was killed in a public place, in the presence of friend and foe, in a remarkable but still perfectly natural manner. The

circumstances were minutely known to all the world, and were never denied or doubted by any one. Our Lord, on the other hand, seems purposely to have withheld such public proof of His resurrection as would have left no room for unbelief. He showed Himself, 'not to all the people'—not to His enemies, whom His appearance would have overwhelmed—but 'to witnesses chosen before;' to the circle of His own friends. There is no evidence which a jury could admit that He was ever actually dead. So unusual was it for persons crucified to die so soon, that Pilate, we are told, 'marvelled.' The subsequent appearances were strange, and scarcely intelligible. Those who saw Him did not recognize Him till He was made known to them in the breaking of bread. He was visible and invisible. He was mistaken by those who were most intimate with Him for another person; nor do the accounts agree which are given by the different Evangelists. Of investigation in the modern sense (except in the one instance of St Thomas, and St Thomas was rather rebuked than praised) there was none, and could be none. The evidence offered was different in kind, and the blessing was not to those who satisfied themselves of the truth of the fact by a searching inquiry, but who gave their assent with the unhesitating confidence of love.

St Paul's account of his own conversion is an instance of the kind of testimony which then worked the strongest conviction. St Paul, a fiery fanatic on a mission of persecution with the midday Syrian sun streaming down upon his head, was struck to the

ground, and saw in a vision our Lord in the air. If such a thing were to occur at the present day, and if a modern physician were consulted about it, he would say, without hesitation, that it was an effect of an overheated brain, and that there was nothing extraordinary or unusual about the matter. If the impression left by the appearance had been too strong for such an explanation to be satisfactory, the person to whom it occurred, especially if he was a man of St Paul's intellectual stature, would have at once examined into the facts otherwise known, connected with the subject of what he had seen. St Paul had evidently before disbelieved our Lord's resurrection—had disbelieved it fiercely and passionately; we should have expected that he would at once have sought for those who could best have told him the details of the truth. St Paul, however, did nothing of the kind. He went for a year into Arabia, and when at last he returned to Jerusalem, he rather held aloof from those who had been our Lord's companions, and who had witnessed his ascension. He saw Peter, he saw James; 'of the rest of the apostles saw he none.' To him evidently the proof of the resurrection was the vision which he had himself seen. It was to that which he always referred when called on for a defence of his faith.

Of evidence for the resurrection, in the common sense of the word, there may be enough to show that something extraordinary occurred; but not enough, unless we assume the fact to be true on far other grounds, to produce any absolute and unhesitating con-

viction, and inasmuch as the resurrection is the key-stone of Christianity, the belief in it must be something far different from that suspended judgment in which history alone would leave us.

Human testimony, we repeat, under the most favourable circumstances imaginable, knows nothing of 'absolute certainty;' and if historical facts are bound up with the creed, and if they are to be received with the same completeness as the laws of conscience, they rest, and must rest, either on the Divine truth of Scripture, or on the Divine witness in ourselves. On human evidence the miracles of St Teresa and St Francis of Assisi are as well established as those of the New Testament.

M. Ernest Renan has recently produced an account of the Gospel story which, written as it is by a man of piety, intellect, and imagination, is spreading rapidly through the educated world. Carrying out the principles with which Protestants have swept modern history clear of miracles to their natural conclusions, he dismisses all that is miraculous from the life of our Lord, and endeavours to reproduce the original Galilean youth who lived, and taught, and died in Palestine eighteen hundred years ago. We have no intention of reviewing M. Renan. He will be read soon enough by many who would better consider their peace of mind by leaving him alone. For ourselves, we are unable to see by what right, if he rejects the miraculous part of the narrative, he retains the rest; the imagination and the credulity which invent extraordinary incidents,

invent ordinary incidents also; and if the Divine element in the life is legendary, the human may be legendary also. But there is one lucid passage in the introduction which we commend to the perusal of controversial theologians:—

'No miracle such as those of which early histories are full has taken place under conditions which science can accept. Experience shows, without exception, that miracles occur only in times and in countries in which miracles are believed in, and in the presence of persons who are disposed to believe them. No miracle has ever been performed before an assemblage of spectators capable of testing its reality. Neither uneducated people, nor even men of the world, have the requisite capacity; great precautions are needed, and a long habit of scientific research. Have we not seen men of the world in our own time become the dupes of the most childish and absurd illusions? And if it be certain that no contemporary miracles will bear investigation, is it not possible that the miracles of the past, were we able to examine into them in detail, would be found equally to contain an element of error? It is not in the name of this or that philosophy, it is in the name of an experience which never varies, that we banish miracles from history. We do not say a miracle is impossible—we say only that no miracle has ever yet been proved. Let a worker of miracles come forward to-morrow with pretensions serious enough to deserve examination. Let us suppose him to announce that he is able to raise a dead man to life. What would

be done? A committee would be appointed composed of physiologists, physicians, chemists, and persons accustomed to exact investigation; a body would then be selected which the committee would assure itself was really dead; and a place would be chosen where the experiment was to take place. Every precaution would be taken to leave no opening for uncertainty; and if, under those conditions, the restoration to life was effected, a probability would be arrived at, which would be almost equal to certainty. An experiment, however, should always admit of being repeated. What a man has done once he should be able to do again; and in miracles there can be no question of ease or difficulty. The performer would be requested to repeat the operation under other circumstances upon other bodies; and if he succeeded on every occasion, two points would be established: first, that there may be in this world such things as supernatural operations; and, secondly, that the power to perform them is delegated to, or belongs to, particular persons. But who does not perceive that no miracle was ever performed under such conditions as these?'

We have quoted this passage because it expresses with extreme precision and clearness the common-sense principle which we apply to all supernatural stories of our own time, which Protestant theologians employ against the whole cycle of Catholic miracles, and which M. Renan is only carrying to its logical conclusions in applying to the history of our Lord, if the Gospels are tried by the mere tests of historical criticism. The

Gospels themselves tell us why M. Renan's conditions were never satisfied. Miracles were not displayed in the presence of sceptics to establish scientific truths. When the adulterous generation sought after a sign, the sign was not given; nay, it is even said that in the presence of unbelief, our Lord was not able to work miracles. But science has less respect for that undoubting and submissive willingness to believe; and it is quite certain that if we attempt to establish the truth of the New Testament on the principles of Paley—if with Professor Jowett 'we interpret the Bible as any other book,' the element of miracle which has evaporated from the entire surface of human history will not maintain itself in the sacred ground of the Gospels, and the facts of Christianity will melt in our hands like a snow-ball.

Nothing less than a miraculous history can sustain the credibility of miracles, and nothing could be more likely, if revelation be a reality and not a dream, than that the history containing it should be saved in its composition from the intermixture of human infirmity. This is the position in which instinct long ago taught Protestants to entrench themselves, and where alone they can hope to hold their ground: once established in these lines, they were safe and unassailable, unless it could be demonstrated that any fact or facts related in the Bible were certainly untrue.

Nor would it be necessary to say any more upon the subject. Those who believed Christianity would admit the assumption; those who disbelieved Christianity

would repudiate it. The argument would be narrowed to that plain and single issue, and the elaborate treatises upon external evidence would cease to bring discredit upon the cause by their feebleness. Unfortunately—and this is the true secret of our present distractions—it seems certain that in some way or other this belief in inspiration itself requires to be revised. We are compelled to examine more precisely what we mean by the word. The account of the creation of man and the world which is given in Genesis, and which is made by St Paul the basis of his theology, has not yet been reconciled with facts which science knows to be true. Death was in the world before Adam's sin, and unless Adam's age be thrust back to a distance which no ingenuity can torture the letter of Scripture into recognizing, men and women lived and died upon the earth whole millenniums before the Eve of Sacred History listened to the temptation of the snake. Neither has any such deluge as that from which, according to the received interpretation, the ark saved Noah, swept over the globe within the human period. We are told that it was not God's purpose to anticipate the natural course of discovery: as the story of the creation was written in human language, so the details of it may have been adapted to the existing state of human knowledge. The Bible, it is said, was not intended to teach men science, but to teach them what was necessary for the moral training of their souls. It may be that this is true. Spiritual grace affects the moral character of men, but leaves their intellect unin-

proved. The most religious men are as liable as atheists to ignorance of ordinary facts, and inspiration may be only infallible when it touches on truths necessary to salvation. But if it be so, there are many things in the Bible which must become as uncertain as its geology or its astronomy. There is the long secular history of the Jewish people. Let it be once established that there is room for error anywhere, and we have no security for the accuracy of this history. The inspiration of the Bible is the foundation of our whole belief; and it is a grave matter if we are uncertain to what extent it reaches, or how much and what it guarantees to us as true. We cannot live on probabilities. The faith in which we can live bravely and die in peace must be a certainty, so far as it professes to be a faith at all, or it is nothing. It may be that all intellectual efforts to arrive at it are in vain; that it is given to those to whom it is given, and withheld from those from whom it is withheld. It may be that the existing belief is undergoing a silent modification, like those to which the dispensations of religion have been successively subjected; or, again, it may be that to the creed as it is already established there is nothing to be added, and nothing any more to be taken from it. At this moment, however, the most vigorous minds appear least to see their way to a conclusion; and notwithstanding all the school and church building, the extended episcopate, and the religious newspapers, a general doubt is coming up like a thunderstorm against the wind, and blackening the sky. Those who cling

most tenaciously to the faith in which they were educated, yet confess themselves perplexed. They know what they believe; but why they believe it, or why they should require others to believe, they cannot tell or cannot agree. Between the authority of the Church and the authority of the Bible, the testimony of history and the testimony of the Spirit, the ascertained facts of science and the contradictory facts which seem to be revealed, the minds of men are tossed to and fro, harassed by the changed attitude in which scientific investigation has placed us all towards accounts of supernatural occurrences. We thrust the subject aside; we take refuge in practical work; we believe, perhaps, that the situation is desperate, and hopeless of improvement; we refuse to let the question be disturbed. But we cannot escape from our shadow, and the spirit of uncertainty will haunt the world like an uneasy ghost, till we take it by the throat like men.

We return then to the point from which we set out. The time is past for repression. Despotism has done its work; but the day of despotism is gone, and the only remedy is a full and fair investigation. Things will never right themselves if they are let alone. It is idle to say peace when there is no peace; and the concealed imposthume is more dangerous than an open wound. The law in this country has postponed our trial, but cannot save us from it; and the questions which have agitated the Continent are agitating us at last. The student who twenty years ago was contented with the Greek and Latin fathers and the Anglican

divines, now reads Ewald and Renan. The Church authorities still refuse to look their difficulties in the face: they prescribe for mental troubles the established doses of Paley and Pearson; they refuse dangerous questions as sinful, and tread the round of commonplace in placid comfort. But it will not avail. Their pupils grow to manhood, and fight the battle for themselves, unaided by those who ought to have stood by them in their trial, and could not or would not, and the bitterness of those conflicts, and the end of most of them in heart-broken uncertainty or careless indifference, is too notorious to all who care to know about such things.

We cannot afford year after year to be distracted with the tentative scepticism of essayists and reviewers. In a healthy condition of public opinion such a book as Bishop Colenso's would have passed unnoticed, or rather would never have been written, for the difficulties with which it deals would have been long ago met and disposed of. When questions rose in the early and middle ages of the Church, they were decided by councils of the wisest: those best able to judge met together, and compared their thoughts, and conclusions were arrived at which individuals could accept and act upon. At the beginning of the English Reformation, when Protestant doctrine was struggling for reception, and the old belief was merging in the new, the country was deliberately held in formal suspense. Protestants and Catholics were set to preach on alternate Sundays in the same pulpit; subjects were discussed freely in the

ears of the people; and at last, when all had been said on both sides, Convocation and Parliament embodied the result in formulas. Councils will no longer answer the purpose: the clergy have no longer a superiority of intellect or cultivation; and a conference of prelates from all parts of Christendom, or even from all departments of the English Church, would not present an edifying spectacle. Parliament may no longer meddle with opinions unless it be to untie the chains which it forged three centuries ago. But better than councils, better than sermons, better than Parliament, is that free discussion through a free press which is the fittest instrument for the discovery of truth, and the most effectual means for preserving it.

We shall be told, perhaps, that we are beating the air—that the press is free, and that all men may and do write what they please. It is not so. Discussion is not free so long as the clergy who take any side but one are liable to be prosecuted and deprived of their means of living; it is not free so long as the expression of doubt is considered as a sin by public opinion and as a crime by the law. So far are we from free discussion, that the world is not yet agreed that a free discussion is desirable; and till it be so agreed, the substantial intellect of the country will not throw itself into the question. The battle will continue to be fought by outsiders, who suffice to disturb a repose which they cannot restore; and that collective voice of the national understanding, which alone can give back to us a peaceful and assured conviction, will not be heard.

CRITICISM AND THE GOSPEL HISTORY.[1]

THE spirit of criticism is not the spirit of religion. The spirit of criticism is a questioning spirit; the spirit of religion is a spirit of faith, of humility and submission. Other qualities may go to the formation of a religious character in the highest and grandest sense of the word; but the virtues which religious teachers most generally approve, which make up the ideal of a Catholic saint, which the Catholic and all other Churches endeavour most to cultivate in their children, are those of passive and loyal obedience, a devotion without reserve or qualification; or to use the technical word, 'a spirit of teachableness.' A religious education is most successful when it has formed a mind to which difficulties are welcome as an opportunity for the triumph of faith —which regards doubts as temptations to be resisted like the suggestions of sensuality, and which alike in action or opinion follows the path prescribed to it with affectionate and unhesitating confidence.

[1] *Fraser's Magazine*, 1864.

To men or women of the tender and sensitive piety which is produced by such a training, an inquiry into the grounds of its faith appears shocking and profane. To demand an explanation of ambiguities or mysteries of which they have been accustomed to think only upon their knees, is as it were to challenge the Almighty to explain His ways to His creatures, and to refuse obedience unless human presumption has been first gratified.

Undoubtedly, not in religion only, but in any branch of human knowledge, teachableness is the condition of growth. We augur ill for the future of the youth who sets his own judgment against that of his instructors, and refuses to believe what cannot be at once made plain to him. Yet again the wise instructor will not lightly discourage questions which are prompted by an intelligent desire of knowledge. That an uninquiring submission produces characters of great and varied beauty, that it has inspired the most splendid acts of endurance which have given a lustre to humanity, no one will venture to deny. A genial faith is one of that group of qualities which commend themselves most to the young, the generous, and the enthusiastic—to those whose native and original nobleness has suffered least from contact with the world—which belong rather to the imagination than the reason, and stand related to truth through the emotions rather than through the sober calculations of probability. It is akin to loyalty, to enthusiasm, to hero-worship, to that deep affection to a person or a cause which can see no fault in what it loves.

'Belief,' says Mr Sewell, 'is a virtue; doubt is a sin.' Iago is nothing if not critical; and the sceptical spirit—*der Geist der stets vernient*—which is satisfied with nothing, which sees in everything good the seed of evil, and the weak spot in every great cause or nature, has been made the special characteristic—we all feel with justice—of the devil.

And yet this devotedness or devotion, this reverence for authority, is but one element of excellence. To reverence is good; but on the one condition that the object of it be a thing which deserves reverence; and the necessary complement, the security that we are not bestowing our best affections where they should not be given, must be looked for in some quality which, if less attractive, is no less essential for our true welfare. To prove all things—to try the spirits whether they be of God—is a duty laid upon us by the highest authority; and what is called progress in human things—religious as well as material—has been due uniformly to a dissatisfaction with them as they are. Every advance in science, every improvement in the command of the mechanical forces of nature, every step in political or social freedom, has risen in the first instance from an act of scepticism, from an uncertainty whether the formulas, or the opinions, or the government, or the received practical theories were absolutely perfect; or whether beyond the circle of received truths there might not lie something broader, deeper, truer, and thus better deserving the acceptance of mankind.

Submissiveness, humility, obedience, produce if un-

corrected, in politics a nation of slaves, whose baseness becomes an incentive to tyranny; in religion, they produce the consecration of falsehood, poperies, immaculate conceptions, winking images, and the confessional. The spirit of inquiry if left to itself becomes in like manner a disease of uncertainty, and terminates in universal scepticism. It seems as if in a healthy order of things, to the willingness to believe there should be chained as its inseparable companion a jealousy of deception; and there is no lesson more important for serious persons to impress upon themselves than that each of these temperaments must learn to tolerate the other; faith accepting from reason the sanction of its service, and reason receiving in return the warm pulsations of life. The two principles exist together in the highest natures; and the man who in the best sense of the word is devout, is also the most cautious to whom or to what he pays his devotion. Among the multitude, the units of which are each inadequate and incomplete, the elements are disproportionately mixed; some men are humble and diffident, some are sceptical and inquiring; yet both are filling a place in the great intellectual economy; both contribute to make up the sum and proportion of qualities which are required to hold the balance even; and neither party is entitled to say to the other, 'Stand by; I am holier than thou.'

And as it is with individuals, so is it also with whole periods and cycles. For centuries together the believing spirit held undisputed sovereignty; and these

were what are called 'ages of faith' ages, that is, in which the highest business of the intellect was to pray rather than to investigate; when for every unusual phenomenon a supernatural cause was instinctively assumed; when wonders were credible in proportion to their magnitude; and theologians, with easy command of belief, added miracle to miracle and piled dogma upon dogma. Then the tide changed; a fresh era opened, which in the eyes of those who considered the old system the only right one, was the letting loose of the impersonated spirit of evil; when profane eyes were looking their idols in the face; when men were saying to the miraculous images, 'You are but stone and wood,' and to the piece of bread, 'You are but dust as I am dust;' and then the huge mediæval fabric crumbled down in ruin.

All forms of thought, all objects of devotion, are made thus liable to perpetual revision, if only that belief shall not petrify into habit, but remain the reasonable conviction of a reasonable soul. The change of times and the change of conditions change also the appearance of things which in themselves are the same which they always were. Facts supposed once to be as fixed as the stars melt into fiction. A closer acquaintance with the phenomena of experience has revealed to us the action of forces before undreamt of working throughout nature with unerring uniformity; and to the mediæval stories of magic, witchcraft, or the miracles of saints, we are thus placed in a new relation. The direct evidence on which such stories were received

may remain unimpaired, but it no longer produces the same conviction. Even in ordinary human things where the evidence is lost—as in some of our own State trials, and where we know only that it was such as brought conviction to judges, juries, and parliaments—historians do not hesitate to call their verdicts into question, thinking it more likely that whole masses of men should have been led away by passion or fraud or cowardice than that this or that particular crime should have been committed. That we often go beyond our office and exaggerate the value of our new criteria of truth may be possible enough; but it is no less certain that this is the tendency of modern thought. Our own age, like every age which has gone before it, judges the value of testimony, not by itself merely, but by the degree to which it corresponds with our own sense of the laws of probability; and we consider events probable or improbable by the habit of mind which is the result of our general knowledge and culture. To the Catholic of the middle ages a miracle was more likely than not; and when he was told that a miracle had been worked, he believed it as he would have believed had he been told that a shower of rain had fallen, or that the night frost had killed the buds upon his fruit trees. If his cattle died, he found the cause in the malice of Satan or the evil eye of a witch; and if two or more witnesses could have been found to swear that they had heard an old woman curse him, she would have been burnt for a sorceress. The man of science, on the other hand, knows nothing of witches

and sorcerers; when he can find a natural cause he refuses to entertain the possibility of the intervention of a cause beyond nature; and thus that very element of marvel which to the more superstitious temperament was an evidence of truth, becomes to the better informed a cause of suspicion.

So it has been that throughout history, as between individuals among ourselves, we trace two habits of thought, one of which has given us churches, creeds, and the knowledge of God; the other has given us freedom and science, has pruned the luxuriance of imaginative reverence, and reminds piety of what it is too ready to forget—that God is truth. Yet, essential as they are to one another, each keeps too absolutely to the circle of its own convictions, and, but half able to recognize the merit of principles which are alien to its own, regards the other as its natural enemy.

To the warm and enthusiastic pietist the inquirer appears as a hater of God, an inveterate blasphemer of holy things, soiling with rude and insolent hands what ought only to be humbly adored. The saint when he has the power calls the sword to his aid, and in his zeal for what he calls the honour of God, makes war upon such people with steel and fire. The innovator, on the other hand, knowing that he is not that evil creature which his rival represents him as being, knowing that he too desires only truth—first suffers, suffers in rough times at stake and scaffold, suffers in our own later days in good name, in reputation, in worldly fortune; and as the whirligig of time brings round his turn of

triumph, takes, in French revolutions and such other fits of madness, his own period of wild revenge. The service of truth is made to appear as one thing, the service of God as another; and in that fatal separation religion dishonours itself with unavailing enmity to what nevertheless it is compelled at last to accept in humiliation; and science, welcoming the character which its adversary flings upon it, turns away with answering hostility from doctrines without which its own highest achievements are but pyramids of ashes.

Is this antagonism a law of humanity? As mankind move upwards through the ascending circles of progress, is it for ever to be with them as with the globe which they inhabit—of which one hemisphere is perpetually dark? Have the lessons of the Reformation been thrown away? Is knowledge always to advance under the ban of Religion? Is faith never to cease to dread investigation? Is science chiefly to value each new discovery as a victory gained over its rival? Is the spiritual world to revolve eternally upon an axis of which the two poles are materialism and superstition, to be buried in their alternate occultations in periods of utter darkness, or lifted into an icy light where there is neither life nor warmth?

How it may be in the remote future it is idle to guess; for the present the signs are not hopeful. We are arrived visibly at one of those recurring times when the accounts are called in for audit; when the title-deeds are to be looked through, and established opinions again tested. It is a process which has been repeated

more than once in the world's history; the last occasion and greatest being the Reformation of the sixteeenth century; and the experience of that matter might have satisfied the most timid that truth has nothing to fear; and that religion emerges out of such trials stronger and brighter than before. Yet Churchmen have not profited by the experience; the pulpits and the religious press ring again with the old shrieks of sacrilege; the machinery of the law courts is set creaking on its rusty hinges, and denunciation and anathema in the old style take the place of reasoning. It will not answer; and the worst danger to what is really true is the want of wisdom in its defenders. The language which we sometimes hear about these things seems to imply that while Christianity is indisputably true, it cannot stand nevertheless without bolt and shackle, as if the Author of our faith had left the evidence so weak that an honest investigation would fail to find it.

Inevitably, the altered relation in which modern culture places the minds of all of us towards the supernatural, will compel a reconsideration of the grounds on which the acceptance of miracles is required. If the English learned clergy had faith as a grain of mustard seed, they would be the first to take possession of the field; they would look the difficulty in the face fearlessly and frankly, and we should not be tossing as we are now in an ocean of uncertainty, ignorant whether, if things seem obscure to us, the fault is with our intellects or our hearts.

It might have been that Providence, anticipating the effect produced on dead testimony by time and change, had raised religion into a higher sphere, and had appointed on earth a living and visible authority which could not err—guided by the Holy Spirit into truth, and Divinely sustained in the possession of it. Such a body the Roman Catholic Church conceives itself to be; but in breaking away from its communion, Protestant Christians have declared their conviction that neither the Church of Rome, nor they themselves, nor any other body of men on earth, are exempt from a liability to error. It is no longer competent for the Anglican communion to say that a doctrine or a fact is true because it forms a part of their teaching, because it has come down to them from antiquity, and because to deny it is sin. Transubstantiation came down to the fathers of the Reformation from antiquity; it was received and insisted upon by the Catholic Church of Christendom; yet nevertheless it was flung out from among us as a lie and an offence. The theory of the Divine authority of the Church was abandoned in the act of Protestantism three centuries ago; it was the central principle of that great revolt that the establishment of particular opinions was no guarantee for their truth; and it becomes thus our duty as well as our right to examine periodically our intellectual defences, to abandon positions which the alteration of time makes untenable, and to admit and invite into the service of the sanctuary the fullest light of advancing knowledge. Of all positions the most fatally suicidal for Protestants

to occupy is the assumption, which it is competent for Roman Catholics to hold, but not for them, that beliefs once sanctioned by the Church are sacred, and that to impugn them is not error but crime.

With a hope, then, that this reproach may be taken away from us; that, in this most wealthily-endowed Church of England, where so many of the most gifted and most accomplished men among us are maintained in well-paid leisure to attend to such things, we may not be left any longer to grope our way in the dark, the present writer puts forward some few perplexities of which it would be well if English divinity contained a clearer solution than is found there. The laity, occupied in other matters, regard the clergy as the trustees of their spiritual interests; but inasmuch as the clergy tell them that the safety of their souls depends on the correctness of their opinions, they dare not close their eyes to the questions which are being asked in louder and even louder tones; and they have a right to demand that they shall not be left to their own unaided efforts to answer such questions. We go to our appointed teachers as to our physicians; we say to them, 'We feel pain here, and here, and here: we do not see our way, and we require you to help us.'

Most of these perplexities are not new: they were felt with the first beginnings of critical investigation; but the fact that they have been so many years before the world without being satisfactorily encountered makes the situation only the more serious. It is the more strange that as time passes on, and divine after

divine is raised to honour and office for his theological services, we should find only when we turn to their writings that loud promises end in no performance; that the chief object which they set before themselves is to avoid difficult ground; and that the points on which we most cry out for satisfaction are passed over in silence, or are disposed of with ineffectual commonplaces.

With a temperament constitutionally religious, and with an instinctive sense of the futility of theological controversies, the English people have long kept the enemy at bay by passive repugnance. To the well-conditioned English layman the religion in which he has been educated is part of the law of the land; the truth of it is assumed in the first principles of his personal and social existence; and attacks on the credibility of his sacred books he has regarded with the same impatience and disdain with which he treats speculations on the rights of property or the common maxims of right and wrong. Thus, while the inspiration of the Bible has been a subject of discussion for a century in Germany, Holland, and France; while even in the desolate villages in the heart of Spain the priests find it necessary to placard the church walls with cautions against rationalism, England hitherto has escaped the trial; and it is only within a very few years that the note of speculation has compelled our deaf ears to listen. That it has come at last is less a matter of surprise than that it should have been so long delayed; and though slow to move, it is likely that so

serious a people will not now rest till they have settled the matter for themselves in some practical way. We are assured that if the truth be, as we are told, of vital moment—vital to all alike, wise and foolish, educated and uneducated—the road to it cannot lie through any very profound inquiries. We refuse to believe that every labourer or mechanic must balance arduous historical probabilities and come to a just conclusion, under pain of damnation. We are satisfied that these poor people are not placed in so cruel a dilemma. Either these abstruse historical questions are open questions, and we are not obliged under those penalties to hold a definite opinion upon them, or else there must be some general principle accessible and easily intelligible, by which the details can be summarily disposed of.

We shall not be much mistaken, perhaps, if we say that the view of most educated English laymen at present is something of this kind. They are aware that many questions may be asked, difficult or impossible to answer satisfactorily, about the creation of the world, the flood, and generally on the historical portion of the Old Testament; but they suppose that if the authority of the Gospel history can be well ascertained, the rest may and must be taken for granted. If it be true that of the miraculous birth, life, death, and resurrection of our Lord, we have the evidence of two evangelists who were eye-witnesses of the facts which they relate, and of two others who wrote under the direction of, or upon the authority of, eye-witnesses, we can afford to dispense with merely curious inquiries. The

subordinate parts of a Divine economy which culminated in so stupendous a mystery may well be as marvellous as itself; and it may be assumed, we think, with no great want of charity, that those who doubt the truth of the Old Testament extend their incredulity to the New; that the point of their disbelief, towards which they are trenching their way through the weak places in the Pentateuch, is the Gospel narrative itself.[1] Whatever difficulty there may be in proving the ancient Hebrew books to be the work of the writers whose names they bear, no one would have cared to challenge their genuineness who was thoroughly convinced of the resurrection of our Lord. And the real object of these speculations lies open before us in the now notorious work of M. Renan, which is shooting through Europe with a rapidity which recalls the era of Luther.

To the question of the authenticity of the Gospels, therefore, the common sense of Englishmen has instinctively turned. If, as English commentators confidently tell us, the Gospel of St Matthew, such as we now possess it, is undoubtedly the work of the publican who followed our Lord from the receipt of custom, and remained with Him to be a witness of His ascension; if St John's Gospel was written by the beloved disciple who lay on Jesus' breast at supper; if the other two were indeed the composition of the companions of St Peter and St Paul; if in these four Gospels we have independent accounts of our Lord's life and passion,

[1] I do not speak of individuals; I speak of *tendency*.

mutually confirming each other; and if it can be proved that they existed and were received as authentic in the first century of the Christian Church, a stronger man than M. Renan will fail to shake the hold of Christianity in England.

We put the question hypothetically, not as meaning to suggest the fact as uncertain, but being — as the matter is of infinite moment—being, as it were, the hinge on which our faith depends, we are forced beyond our office to trespass on ground which we leave usually to professional theologians, and to tell them plainly that there are difficulties which it is their business to clear up, but to which, with worse than imprudence, they close their own eyes, and deliberately endeavour to keep them from ours. Some of these it is the object of this paper to point out, with an earnest hope that Dean Alford, or Dr Ellicott, or some other competent clergyman, may earn our gratitude by telling us what to think about them. Setting aside their duty to us, they will find frank dealing in the long run their wisest policy. The conservative theologians of England have carried silence to the point of indiscretion.

Looking, then, to the three first Gospels, usually called the Synoptical, we are encountered immediately with a remarkable common element which runs through them all—a resemblance too peculiar to be the result of accident, and impossible to reconcile with the theory that the writers were independent of each other. It is not that general similarity which we should expect in different accounts of the same scenes and events, but

amidst many differences, a broad vein of circumstantial identity extending both to substance and expression.

And the identity is of several kinds.

I. Although the three evangelists relate each of them some things peculiar to themselves, and although between them there are some striking divergencies—as, for instance, between the account of our Lord's miraculous birth in St Matthew and St Luke, and in the absence in St Mark of any mention of the miraculous birth at all—nevertheless, the body of the story is essentially the same. Out of those words and actions—so many, that if all were related the world itself could not contain the books that should be written—the three evangelists select for the most part the same; the same parables, the same miracles, and, more or less complete, the same addresses. When the material from which to select was so abundant—how abundant we have but to turn to the fourth evangelist to see—it is at least singular that three writers should have made so nearly the same choice.

II. But this is not all. Not only are the things related the same, but the language in which they are expressed is the same. Sometimes the resemblance is such as would have arisen had the evangelists been translating from a common document in another language. Sometimes, and most frequently, there is an absolute verbal identity; sentences, paragraphs, long passages, are word for word the very same; a few expressions have been slightly varied, a particle transposed, a tense or a case altered, but the differences being

no greater than would arise if a number of persons were to write from memory some common passages which they knew almost by heart. That there should have been this identity in the account of the *words* used by our Lord seems at first sight no more than we should expect. But it extends to the narrative as well; and with respect to the parables and discourses, there is this extraordinary feature, that whereas our Lord is supposed to have spoken in the ordinary language of Palestine, the resemblance between the evangelists is in the Greek translation of them; and how unlikely it is that a number of persons in translating from one language into another should hit by accident on the same expressions, the simplest experiment will show.

Now, waiving for a moment the inspiration of the Gospels; interpreting the Bible, to use Mr Jowett's canon, as any other book, what are we to conclude from phenomena of this kind? What in fact do we conclude when we encounter them elsewhere? In the lives of the saints, in the monkish histories, there are many parallel cases. A mediæval chronicler, when he found a story well told by his predecessor, seldom cared to recompose it; he transcribed the words as they stood into his own narrative, contented perhaps with making a few trifling changes to add a finish or a polish. Sometimes two chroniclers borrow from a third. There is the same identity in particular expressions, the same general resemblance, the same divergence, as each improves his original from his independent knowledge by addition or omission; but the process is so transparent,

that when the original is lost, the existence of it can be inferred with certainty.

Or to take a more modern parallel—we must entreat our readers to pardon any seeming irreverence which may appear in the comparison—if in the letters of the correspondents of three different newspapers written from America or Germany, we were to read the same incidents told in the same language, surrounded it might be with much that was unlike, but nevertheless in themselves identical, and related in words which, down to unusual and remarkable terms of expression, were exactly the same, what should we infer?

Suppose, for instance, the description of a battle; if we were to find but a single paragraph in which two out of three correspondents agreed verbally, we should regard it as a very strange coincidence. If all three agreed verbally, we should feel certain it was more than accident. If throughout their letters there was a recurring series of such passages, no doubt would be left in the mind of any one that either the three correspondents had seen each other's letters, or that each had had before him some common narrative which he had incorporated in his own account. It might be doubtful which of these two explanations was the true one; but that one or other of them was true, unless we suppose a miracle, is as certain as any conclusion in human things can be certain at all. The sworn testimony of eye-witnesses who had seen the letters so composed would add nothing to the weight of a proof which without their evidence would be overwhelming: and were the

writers themselves, with their closest friends and companions, to swear that there had been no intercommunication, and no story pre-existing of which they had made use, and that each had written *bonâ fide* from his own original observation, an English jury would sooner believe the whole party perjured than persuade themselves that so extraordinary a coincidence would have occurred.

Nor would it be difficult to ascertain from internal evidence which of the two possible interpretations was the real one. If the writers were men of evident good faith; if their stories were in parts widely different; if they made no allusion to each other, nor ever referred to one another as authorities; finally, if neither of them, in giving a different account of any matter from that given by his companions, professed either to be supplying an omission or correcting a mistake, then we should have little doubt that they had themselves not communicated with each other, but were supplementing, each of them from other sources of information, a central narrative which all alike had before them.

How far may we apply the parallel to the Synoptical Gospels? In one sense the inspiration lifts them above comparison, and disposes summarily of critical perplexities; there is no difficulty which may not be explained by a miracle; and in that aspect the points of disagreement between these accounts are more surprising than the similarities. It is on the disagreements in fact that the labours of commentators have chiefly been expended. Yet it is a question whether, on the whole,

inspiration does not leave unaffected the ordinary human phenomena; and it is hard to suppose that where the rules of judgment in ordinary writings are so distinct, God would have thus purposely cast a stumbling-block in our way, and contrived a snare into which our reason should mislead us. That is hard to credit; yet that and nothing else we must believe if we refuse to apply to the Gospel the same canons of criticism which with other writings would be a guide so decisive. It may be assumed that the facts connected with them admit a natural explanation; and we arrive, therefore, at the same conclusion as before: that either two of the evangelists borrowed from the third, or else that there was some other gospel besides those which are now extant; existing perhaps both in Hebrew and Greek—existing certainly in Greek—the fragments of which are scattered up and down through St Mark, St Matthew, and St Luke, in masses sufficiently large to be distinctly recognizable.

That at an early period in the Christian Church many such Gospels existed, we know certainly from the words of St Luke. St Paul alludes to words used by our Lord which are not mentioned by the evangelists, which he assumed nevertheless to be well known to his hearers. He speaks, too, of an appearance of our Lord after His resurrection to five hundred brethren; on which the four Gospels are also silent. It is indisputable, therefore, that besides and antecedent to them there were other accounts of our Lord's life in use in the Christian Church. And indeed, what more natural,

what more necessary, than that from the day on which the apostles entered upon their public mission, some narrative should have been drawn up of the facts which they were about to make known? Then as little as now could the imagination of men be trusted to relate accurately a story composed of stupendous miracles without mistake or exaggeration; and their very first step would have been to compose an account of what had passed, to which they could speak with certainty, and which they could invest with authoritative sanction. Is it not possible then that the identical passages in the Synoptical Gospels are the remains of something of this kind, which the evangelists, in their later, fuller, and more complete histories, enlarged and expanded? The conjecture has been often made, and English commentators have for the most part dismissed it slightingly; not apparently being aware that in rejecting one hypothesis they were bound to suggest another; or at least to admit that there was something which required explanation, though this particular suggestion did not seem satisfactory. Yet if it were so, the external testimony for the truth of the Gospel history would be stronger than before. It would amount to the collective view of the first congregation of Christians, who had all immediate and personal knowledge of our Lord's miracles and death and resurrection.

But perhaps the external history of the four Gospels may throw some light upon the question, if indeed we can speak of light where all is a cloud of uncertainty It would seem as if the sources of Christianity, like the

roots of all other living things, were purposely buried in mystery. There exist no ancient writings whatever of such vast moment to mankind of which so little can be authentically known.

The four Gospels, in the form and under the names which they at present bear, become visible only with distinctness towards the end of the second century of the Christian era. Then it was that they assumed the authoritative position which they have ever since maintained, and were selected by the Church out of the many other then existing narratives as the supreme and exclusive authorities for our Lord's life. Irenæus is the first of the Fathers in whose writings they are found attributed by name to St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke, and St John. That there were four true evangelists, and that there could be neither more nor less than four, Irenæus had persuaded himself because there were four winds or spirits, and four divisions of the earth, for which the Church being universal required four columns; because the cherubim had four faces, to each of which an evangelist corresponded; because four covenants had been given to mankind—one before the Deluge in Adam, one after the Deluge in Noah, the third in Moses, the fourth and greatest in the New Testament; while again the name of Adam was composed of four letters. It is not to be supposed that the intellects of those great men who converted the world to Christianity were satisfied with arguments so imaginative as these; they must have had other closer and more accurate grounds for their decision; but the mere employment of such

figures as evidence in any sense, shows the enormous difference between their modes of reasoning and ours, and illustrates the difficulty of deciding at our present distance from them how far their conclusions were satisfactory.

Of the Gospels separately the history is immediately lost in legend.

The first notice of a Gospel of St Matthew is in the well-known words of Papias, a writer who in early life might have seen St John. The works of Papias are lost—a misfortune the more to be regretted because Eusebius speaks of him as a man of very limited understanding, *παινὺ σμικρὸς τὸν νοῦν*. Understanding and folly are words of undetermined meaning; and when language like that of Irenæus could seem profound it is quite possible that Papias might have possessed commonplace faculties which would have been supremely useful to us. A surviving fragment of him says that St Matthew put together the discourses of our Lord in Hebrew, and that every one interpreted them as he could. Pantænus, said by Eusebius to have been another contemporary of the apostles, was reported to have gone to India, to have found there a congregation of Christians which had been established by St Bartholomew, and to have seen in use among them this Hebrew Gospel. Origen repeats the story, which in his time had become the universal Catholic tradition, that St Matthew's was the first Gospel, that it was written in Hebrew, and that it was intended for the use of the Jewish converts. Jerome adds that it was

unknown when or by whom it was rendered into a Greek version. That was all which the Church had to say; and what had become of that Hebrew original no one could tell.

That there existed *a* Hebrew Gospel in very early times is well authenticated; there was a Gospel called the Gospel of the Ebionites or Nazarenes, of which Origen possessed a copy, and which St Jerome thought it worth while to translate; this too is lost, and Jerome's translation of it also; but the negative evidence seems conclusive that it was not the lost Gospel of St Matthew. Had it been so it could not have failed to be recognized, although from such accounts of it as have been preserved, it possessed some affinity with St Matthew's Gospel. In one instance, indeed, it gave the right reading of a text which has perplexed orthodox commentators, and has induced others to suspect that that Gospel in its present form could not have existed before the destruction of Jerusalem. The Zachariah the son of Barachiah said by St Matthew to have been slain between the temple and the altar, is unknown to Old Testament history, while during the siege of Jerusalem a Zachariah the son of Barachiah actually was killed exactly in the manner described. But in the Ebionite Gospel the same words are found with this slight but important difference, that the Zachariah in question is there called the son of Jehoiadah, and is at once identified with the person whose murder is related in the Second Book of Chronicles. The later translator of St Matthew had probably confused the names.

Of St Mark's Gospel the history is even more profoundly obscure. Papias, again the highest discoverable link of the Church tradition, says that St Mark accompanied St Peter to Rome as his interpreter; and that while there he wrote down what St Peter told him, or what he could remember St Peter to have said. Clement of Alexandria enlarges the story. According to Clement, when St Peter was preaching at Rome, the Christian congregation there requested St Mark to write a Gospel for them; St Mark complied without acquainting St Peter, and St Peter when informed of it was uncertain whether to give or withhold his sanction till his mind was set at rest by a vision.

Irenæus, on the other hand, says that St Mark's Gospel was not written till after the death of St Peter and St Paul. St Chrysostom says that after it was written St Mark went to Egypt and published it at Alexandria; Epiphanius again, that the Egyptian expedition was undertaken at the express direction of St Peter himself.

Thus the Church tradition is inconsistent with itself, and in all probability is nothing but a structure of air; it is bound up with the presence of St Peter at Rome; and the only ground for supposing that St Peter was ever at Rome at all is the passage at the close of St Peter's First Epistle, where it pleased the Fathers to assume that the 'Babylon' there spoken of must have been the city of the Cæsars. This passage alone, with the wild stories (now known to have originated in the misreading of an inscription) of St Peter's conflict with

Simon Magus in the presence of the Emperor, form together the light and airy arches on which the huge pretences of the Church of Rome have reared themselves. If the Babylon of the Epistle was Babylon on the Euphrates—and there is not the slightest historical reason to suppose it to have been anything else—the story of the origin of St Mark's Gospel perishes with the legend to which it was inseparably attached by Church tradition.

Of St John's Gospel we do not propose to speak in this place; it forms a subject by itself; and of that it is enough to say that the defects of external evidence which undoubtedly exist seem overborne by the overwhelming proofs of authenticity contained in the Gospel itself.

The faint traditionary traces which inform us that St Matthew and St Mark were supposed to have written Gospels fail us with St Luke. The apostolic and the immediately post-apostolic Fathers never mention Luke as having written a history of our Lord at all. There was indeed a Gospel in use among the Marcionites which resembled that of St Luke, as the Gospel of the Ebionites resembled that of St Matthew. In both the one and the other there was no mention of our Lord's miraculous birth; and later writers accused Marcion of having mutilated St Luke. But apparently their only reason for thinking so was that the two Gospels were like each other; and for all that can be historically proved, the Gospel of the Marcionites may have been the older of the two. What is wanting externally,

however, is supposed to be more than made up by the language of St Luke himself. The Gospel was evidently composed in its present form by the same person who wrote the Acts of the Apostles. In the latter part of the Acts of the Apostles the writer speaks in the first person as the companion of St Paul; and the date of this Gospel seems to be thus conclusively fixed at an early period in the apostolic age. There is at least a high probability that this reasoning is sound; yet it has seemed strange that a convert so eminent as 'the most excellent' Theophilus, to whom St Luke addressed himself, should be found impossible to identify. 'Most excellent' was a title given only to persons of high rank; and it is singular that St Paul himself should never have mentioned so considerable a name. And again, there is something peculiar in the language of the introduction to the Gospel itself. Though St Luke professes to be writing on the authority of eye-witnesses, he does not say he had spoken with eye-witnesses; so far from it, that the word translated in the English version 'delivered' is literally 'handed down;' it is the verb which corresponds to the technical expression for 'tradition;' and the words translated 'having had perfect understanding of all things from the first,' might be rendered more properly, 'having traced or followed up all things from the beginning.' And again, as it is humanly speaking certain that in St Luke's Gospel there are passages, however they are to be explained, which were embodied in it from some other source, so, though extremely probable, it is not abso-

lutely certain that those passages in the Acts in which the writer speaks in the first person are by the same hand as the body of the narrative. If St Luke had anywhere directly introduced himself—if he had said plainly, that he, the writer who was addressing Theophilus, had personally joined St Paul, and in that part of his story was relating what he had seen and heard, there would be no room for uncertainty. But, so far as we know, there is no other instance in literature of a change of person introduced abruptly without explanation. The whole book is less a connected history than a series of episodes and fragments of the proceedings of the apostles; and it is to be noticed that the account of St Paul's conversion, as given in its place in the first part of the narrative, differs in one material point from the second account given later in the part which was unquestionably the work of one of St Paul's companions. There is a possibility—it amounts to no more, and the suggestion is thrown out for the consideration of those who are better able than this writer to judge of it—that in the Gospel and the Acts we have the work of a careful editor of the second century. Towards the close of that century a prominent actor in the great movement which gave their present authority to the four Gospels was Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch; he it was who brought them together, incorporated into a single work—*in unum opus;* and it may be, after all, that in him we have the long-sought person to whom St Luke was writing; that the Gospel which we now possess was compiled at his desire out of other imperfect

Gospels in use in the different Churches; and that it formed a part of his scheme to supersede them by an account more exhaustive, complete, and satisfactory.

To this hypothesis indeed there is an answer which if valid at all is absolutely fatal. We are told that although the names of the writers of the Gospels may not be mentioned until a comparatively late period, yet that the Gospels themselves can be shown to have existed, because they are habitually quoted in the authentic writings of the earliest of the Fathers. If this be so, the slightness of the historical thread is of little moment, and we may rest safely on the solid ground of so conclusive a fact. But is it so? That the early Fathers quoted some accounts of our Lord's life is abundantly clear; but did they quote these? We proceed to examine this question—again tentatively only—we do but put forward certain considerations on which we ask for fuller information.

If any one of the primitive Christian writers was likely to have been acquainted with the authentic writings of the evangelists, that one was indisputably Justin Martyr. Born in Palestine in the year 89, Justin Martyr lived to the age of seventy-six; he travelled over the Roman world as a missionary; and intellectually he was more than on a level with most educated Oriental Christians. He was the first distinctly controversial writer which the Church produced; and the great facts of the Gospel history were obviously as well known to him as they are to ourselves. There are no traces in his writings of an acquaintance with anything

peculiar either to St John or St Mark; but there are extracts in abundance often identical with and generally nearly resembling passages in St Matthew and St Luke. Thus at first sight it would be difficult to doubt that with these two Gospels at least he was intimately familiar. And yet in all his citations there is this peculiarity, that Justin Martyr never speaks of either of the evangelists by name; he quotes or seems to quote invariably from something which he calls 'Απομνημονεύματα τῶν 'Αποστόλων, or 'Memoirs of the Apostles.' It is no usual habit of his to describe his authorities vaguely: when he quotes the Apocalypse he names St John; when he refers to a prophet he specifies Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Daniel. Why, unless there was some particular reason for it, should he use so singular an expression whenever he alludes to the sacred history of the New Testament? why, if he knew the names of the evangelists, did he never mention them even by accident? Nor is this the only singularity in Justin Martyr's quotations. There are those slight differences between them and the text of the Gospels which appear between the Gospels themselves. When we compare an extract in Justin with the parallel passage in St Matthew, we find often that it differs from St Matthew just as St Matthew differs from St Luke, or both from St Mark—great verbal similarity—many paragraphs agreeing word for word—and then other paragraphs where there is an alteration of expression, tense, order, or arrangement.

Again, just as in the midst of the general resemblance

between the Synoptical Gospels, each evangelist has something of his own which is not to be found in the others, so in these 'Memoirs of the Apostles' there are facts unknown to either of the evangelists. In the account extracted by Justin from 'the Memoirs,' of the baptism in the Jordan, the words heard from heaven are not as St Matthew gives them—'Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'—but the words of the psalm, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee;' a reading which, singularly enough, was to be found in the Gospel of the Ebionites.

Another curious addition to the same scene is in the words *καὶ πῦρ ἀνήφθη ἐν Ἰορδάνῃ*, 'and a fire was kindled in Jordan.'

Again, Justin Martyr speaks of our Lord having promised 'to clothe us with garments made ready for us if we keep his commandments'—*καὶ αἰώνιον βασιλείαν προνοῆσαι*—whatever those words may precisely mean.

These and other peculiarities in Justin may be explained if we suppose him to have been quoting from memory. The evangelical text might not as yet have acquired its verbal sanctity; and as a native of Palestine he might well have been acquainted with other traditions which lay outside the written word. The silence as to names, however, remains unexplained; and as the facts actually stand there is the same kind of proof, and no more, that Justin Martyr was acquainted with St Matthew and St Luke as there is that one of these evangelists made extracts from the other, or both from St Mark. So long as one set of commentators

decline to recognize the truth of this relation between the Gospels, there will be others who with as much justice will dispute the relation of Justin to them. He too might have used another Gospel, which, though like them, was not identical with them.

After Justin Martyr's death, about the year 170, appeared Tatian's 'Diatessaron,' a work which, as its title implies, was a harmony of four Gospels, and most likely of *the* four; yet again not exactly as we have them. Tatian's harmony, like so many others of the early evangelical histories, was silent on the miraculous birth, and commenced only with the public ministration. The text was in other places different, so much so that Theodoret accuses Tatian of having mutilated the Gospels; but of this Theodoret had probably no better means of judging than we have. The 'Diatessaron' has been long lost, and the name is the only clue to its composition.

Of far more importance than either Justin or Tatian are such writings as remain of the immediate successors of the apostles—Barnabas, Clement of Rome, Polycarp, and Ignatius: it is asserted confidently that in these there are quotations from the Gospels so exact that they cannot be mistaken.

We will examine them one by one.

In an epistle of Barnabas there is one passage—it is the only one of the kind to be found in him—agreeing word for word with the Synoptical Gospels, 'I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.' It is one of the many passages in which the Greek of the

three evangelists is exactly the same; it was to be found also in Justin's 'Memoirs;' and there can be no doubt that Barnabas either knew those Gospels or else the common source—if common source there was—from which the evangelists borrowed. More than this such a quotation does not enable us to say; and till some satisfactory explanation has been offered of the agreement between the evangelists, the argument can advance no further. On the other hand, Barnabas like St Paul had other sources from which he drew his knowledge of our Lord's words. He too ascribes words to Him which are not recorded by the evangelists. *οὕτω φησὶν Ἰήσους· οἱ θέλοντές με ἰδεῖν καὶ ἅψασθαί μου τῆς βασιλείας ὀφείλουσι θλίβεντες καὶ πάθοντες λαβεῖν με.* The thought is everywhere in the Gospels, the words nowhere, nor anything like them.

Both Ignatius and Polycarp appear to quote the Gospels, yet with them also there is the same uncertainty; while Ignatius quotes as genuine an expression which, so far as we know, was peculiar to a translation of the Gospel of the Ebionites—'Handle me and see, for I am not a spirit without body,' *ὅτι οὐκ εἰμὶ δαιμόνιον ἀσώματον.*

Clement's quotations are still more free, for Clement nowhere quotes the text of the evangelists exactly as it at present stands; often he approaches it extremely close; at times the agreement is rather in meaning than words, as if he were translating from another language. But again Clement more noticeably than either of the other apostolic Fathers cites expres-

sions of our Lord of which the evangelists knew nothing.

For instance—

'The Lord saith, "If ye be with me gathered into my bosom, and do not after my commandments, I will cast you off, and I will say unto you, Depart from me, I know you not, ye workers of iniquity."

And again:—

'The Lord said, "Ye shall be as sheep in the midst of wolves." Peter answered and said unto Him, "Will the wolves then tear the sheep?" Jesus said unto Peter, "The sheep need not fear the wolves after they (the sheep) be dead: and fear not ye those who kill you and can do nothing to you; but fear Him who after you be dead hath power over soul and body to cast them into hell-fire."'

In these words we seem to have the lost link in a passage which appears in a different connection in St Matthew and St Luke. It may be said, as with Justin Martyr, that Clement was quoting from memory in the sense rather than in the letter; although even so it is difficult to suppose that he could have invented an interlocution of St Peter. Yet no hypothesis will explain the most strange words which follow:—

'The Lord being asked when His kingdom should come, said, "When two shall be one, and that which is without as that which is within, and the male with the female neither male nor female."'

It is needless to say how remote are such expressions as these from any which have come down to us

through the evangelists; but they were no inventions of Clement. The passage reappears later in Clement of Alexandria, who found it in something which he called the Gospel of the Egyptians.

It will be urged that because Clement quoted other authorities beside the evangelists, it does not follow that he did not know and quote from them. If the citation of a passage which appears in almost the same words in another book is not to be accepted as a proof of an acquaintance with that book, we make it impossible, it may be said, to prove from quotations at all the fact of any book's existence. But this is not the case. If a Father, in relating an event which is told variously in the Synoptical Gospels, had followed one of them minutely in its verbal peculiarities, it would go far to prove that he was acquainted with that one; if the same thing was observed in all his quotations, the proof would amount to demonstration. If he agreed minutely in one place with one Gospel, minutely in a second with another, minutely in a third with another, there would be reason to believe that he was acquainted with them all; but when he merely relates what they also relate in language which approaches theirs and yet differs from it, as they also resemble yet differ from one another, we do not escape from the circle of uncertainty, and we conclude either that the early Fathers made quotations with a looseness irreconcileable with the idea that the language of the Gospels possessed any verbal sacredness to them, or that there were in their times other narratives of our Lord's life standing in the

same relation to the three Gospels as St Matthew stands to St Mark and St Luke.

Thus the problem returns upon us; and it might almost seem as if the explanation was laid purposely beyond our reach. We are driven back upon internal criticism; and we have to ask again what account is to be given of that element common to the Synoptical Gospels, common also to those other Gospels of which we find traces so distinct—those verbal resemblances, too close to be the effect of accident—those differences which forbid the supposition that the evangelists copied one another. So many are those common passages, that if all which is peculiar to each evangelist by himself were dropped, if those words and those actions only were retained which either all three or two at least share together, the figure of our Lord from His baptism to His ascension would remain with scarcely impaired majesty.

One hypothesis, and so far as we can see one only, would make the mystery intelligible, that immediately on the close of our Lord's life some original sketch of it was drawn up by the congregation, which gradually grew and gathered round it, whatever His mother, His relations, or His disciples afterwards individually might contribute. This primary history would thus not be the work of any one mind or man; it would be the joint work of the Church, and thus might well be called 'Memoirs of the Apostles;' and would naturally be quoted without the name of either one of them being specially attached to it. As Christianity spread over

the world, and separate Churches were founded by particular apostles, copies would be multiplied, and copies of those copies; and, unchecked by the presence (before the invention of printing impossible) of any authoritative text, changes would creep in—passages would be left out which did not suit the peculiar views of this or that sect; others would be added as this or that apostle recollected something which our Lord had said that bore on questions raised in the development of the creed. Two great divisions would form themselves between the Jewish and the Gentile Churches; there would be a Hebrew Gospel and a Greek Gospel, and the Hebrew would be translated into Greek, as Papias says St Matthew's Gospel was. Eventually the confusion would become intolerable; and among the conflicting stories the Church would have been called on to make its formal choice.

This fact at least is certain from St Luke's words, that at the time when he was writing many different narratives did actually exist. The hypothesis of a common origin for them has as yet found little favour with English theologians; yet rather perhaps because it would be inconvenient for certain peculiar forms of English thought than because it has not probability on its side. That the Synoptical Gospels should have been a natural growth rather than the special and independent work of three separate writers, would be unfavourable to a divinity which has built itself up upon particular texts, and has been more concerned with doctrinal polemics than with the broader basements of

historic truth. Yet the text theory suffers equally from the mode in which the first Fathers treated the Gospels, if it were these Gospels indeed which they used. They at least could have attributed no importance to words and phrases; while again, as we said before, a narrative dating from the cradle of Christianity, with the testimony in its favour of such broad and deep reception, would, however wanting in some details, be an evidence of the truth of the main facts of the Gospel history very much stronger than that of three books composed we know not when, and the origin of which it is impossible to trace, which it is impossible to regard as independent, and the writers of which in any other view of them must be assumed to have borrowed from each other.

But the object of this article is not to press either this or any other theory; it is but to ask from those who are able to give it an answer to the most serious of questions. The truth of the Gospel history is now more widely doubted in Europe than at any time since the conversion of Constantine. Every thinking person who has been brought up a Christian and desires to remain a Christian, yet who knows anything of what is passing in the world, is looking to be told on what evidence the New Testament claims to be received. The state of opinion proves of itself that the arguments hitherto offered produce no conviction. Every other miraculous history is discredited as legend, however exalted the authority on which it seems to be rested.

We crave to have good reason shown us for maintaining still the one great exception. Hard worked in other professions, and snatching with difficulty sufficient leisure to learn how complicated is the problem, the laity can but turn to those for assistance who are set apart and maintained as their theological trustees. We can but hope and pray that some one may be found to give us an edition of the Gospels in which the difficulties will neither be slurred over with convenient neglect nor noticed with affected indifference. It may or may not be a road to a bishopric; it may or may not win the favour of the religious world; but it will earn at least the respectful gratitude of those who cannot trifle with holy things, and who believe that true religion is the service of truth.

The last words were scarcely written when an advertisement appeared, the importance of which can scarcely be over-estimated. A commentary is announced on the Old and New Testaments, to be composed with a view to what are called the 'misrepresentations' of modern criticism. It is to be brought out under the direction of the heads of the Church, and is the nearest approach to an official act in these great matters which they have ventured for two hundred years. It is not for us to anticipate the result. The word 'misrepresentations' is unfortunate; we should have augured better for the work if instead of it had been written 'the sincere perplexities of honest minds.' But the execution may be better than the promise. If these perplexities are

encountered honourably and successfully, the Church may recover its supremacy over the intellect of the country; if otherwise, the archbishop who has taken the command will have steered the vessel direct upon the rocks.

THE BOOK OF JOB.[1]

IT will be matter some day of curious inquiry to ascertain why, notwithstanding the high reverence with which the English people regard the Bible, they have done so little in comparison with their continental contemporaries towards arriving at a proper understanding of it. The books named below[2] form but a section of a long list which has appeared during the last few years in Germany on the Book of Job alone; and this book has not received any larger share of attention than the others, either of the Old or the New Testament. Whatever be the nature or the origin of these books (and on this point there is much difference

[1] *Westminster Review*, 1853.

[2] 1. *Die poetischen Bücher des Alten Bundes.* Erklärt von Heinrich Ewald. Göttingen: bei Vanderhoeck und Ruprecht. 1836.

2. *Kurz gefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament.* Zweite Lieferung. *Hiob.* Von Ludwig Hirzel. Zweite Auflage, durchgesehen von Dr Justus Olshausen. Leipzig. 1852.

3. *Quæstionum in Jobeidos locos vexatos Specimen.* Von D. Hermannus Hupfeld. Halis Saxonum. 1853.

of opinion among the Germans as among ourselves) they are all agreed, orthodox and unorthodox, that at least we should endeavour to understand them; and that no efforts can be too great, either of research or criticism, to discover their history, or elucidate their meaning.

We shall assent, doubtless, eagerly, perhaps noisily and indignantly, to so obvious a truism; but our own efforts in the same direction will not bear us out. Able men in England employ themselves in matters of a more practical character; and while we refuse to avail ourselves of what has been done elsewhere, no book, or books, which we produce on the interpretation of Scripture acquire more than a partial or an ephemeral reputation. The most important contribution to our knowledge on this subject which has been made in these recent years is the translation of the 'Library of the Fathers,' by which it is about as rational to suppose that the analytical criticism of modern times can be superseded, as that the place of Herman and Dindorf could be supplied by an edition of the old scholiasts.

It is, indeed, reasonable that as long as we are persuaded that our English theory of the Bible, as a whole, is the right one, we should shrink from contact with investigations which, however ingenious in themselves, are based on what we know to be a false foundation. But there are some learned Germans whose orthodoxy would pass examination at Exeter Hall; and there are many subjects, such, for instance, as the present, on which all their able men are agreed in conclusions that

cannot rationally give offence to any one. With the Book of Job, analytical criticism has only served to clear up the uncertainties which have hitherto always hung about it. It is now considered to be, beyond all doubt, a genuine Hebrew original, completed by its writer almost in the form in which it now remains to us. The questions on the authenticity of the Prologue and Epilogue, which once were thought important, have given way before a more sound conception of the dramatic unity of the entire poem; and the volumes before us contain merely an inquiry into its meaning, bringing, at the same time, all the resources of modern scholarship and historical and mythological research to bear upon the obscurity of separate passages. It is the most difficult of all the Hebrew compositions—many words occurring in it, and many thoughts, not to be found elsewhere in the Bible. How difficult our translators found it may be seen by the number of words which they were obliged to insert in italics, and the doubtful renderings which they have suggested in the margin. One instance of this, in passing, we will notice in this place—it will be familiar to every one as the passage quoted at the opening of the English burial service, and adduced as one of the doctrinal proofs of the resurrection of the body:—'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth; and *though*, after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh I shall see God.' So this passage stands in the ordinary version. But the words in italics have nothing answering to

them in the original — they were all added by the translators[1] to fill out their interpretation; and for *in my flesh*, they tell us themselves in the margin that we may read (and, in fact, we ought to read, and must read) '*out of*,' or '*without*' *my flesh*.' It is but to write out the verses, omitting the conjectural additions, and making that one small but vital correction, to see how frail a support is there for so large a conclusion: 'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and shall stand at the latter upon the earth; and after my skin destroy this ; yet without my flesh I shall see God.' If there is any doctrine of a resurrection here, it is a resurrection precisely *not* of the body, but of the spirit. And now let us only add, that the word translated Redeemer is the technical expression for the 'avenger of blood;' and that the second paragraph ought to be rendered—'and one to come after me (my next of kin, to whom the avenging my injuries belongs) shall stand upon my dust,' and we shall see how much was to be done towards the mere exegesis of the text. This is an extreme instance, and no one will question the general beauty and majesty of our translation; but there are many mythical and physical allusions scattered over the poem, which, in the sixteenth century, there were positively no means of understanding; and perhaps, too, there were mental tendencies in the translators themselves which prevented them from adequately apprehending even the drift and spirit of the com-

[1] Or rather by St Jerome, whom our translators have followed.

position. The form of the story was too stringent to allow such tendencies any latitude; but they appear, from time to time, sufficiently to produce serious confusion. With these recent assistances, therefore, we propose to say something of the nature of this extraordinary book—a book of which it is to say little to call unequalled of its kind, and which will one day, perhaps, when it is allowed to stand on its own merits, be seen towering up alone, far away above all the poetry of the world. How it found its way into the canon, smiting as it does through and through the most deeply-seated Jewish prejudices, is the chief difficulty about it now; to be explained only by a traditional acceptance among the sacred books, dating back from the old times of the national greatness, when the minds of the people were hewn in a larger type than was to be found among the Pharisees of the great synagogue. But its authorship, its date, and its history, are alike a mystery to us: it existed at the time when the canon was composed; and this is all that we know beyond what we can gather out of the language and contents of the poem itself.

Before going further, however, we must make room for a few remarks of a very general kind. Let it have been written when it would, it marks a period in which the religious convictions of thinking men were passing through a vast crisis; and we shall not understand it without having before us clearly something of the conditions which periods of such a kind always and necessarily exhibit.

The history of religious speculation appears in extreme outline to have been of the following character. We may conceive mankind to have been originally launched into the universe with no knowledge either of themselves or of the scene in which they were placed; with no actual knowledge, but distinguished from the rest of the creation by a faculty of gaining knowledge; and first unconsciously, and afterwards consciously and laboriously, to have commenced that long series of experience and observation which has accumulated in thousands of years to what we now see around us. Limited on all sides by conditions which they must have felt to be none of their own imposing, and finding everywhere forces working, over which they had no control, the fear which they would naturally entertain of these invisible and mighty agents assumed, under the direction of an idea which we may perhaps call inborn and inherent in human nature, a more generous character of reverence and awe. The laws of the outer world, as they discovered them, they regarded as the decrees, or as the immediate energies, of personal beings; and as knowledge grew up among them, they looked upon it, not as knowledge of nature, but of God, or the gods. All early paganism appears, on careful examination, to have arisen out of a consecration of the first rudiments of physical or speculative science. The twelve labours of Hercules are the labours of the sun, of which Hercules is an old name, through the twelve signs. Chronos, or *time*, being measured by the apparent motion of the heavens, is figured as their child;

Time, the universal parent, devours its own offspring, yet is again itself, in the high faith of a human soul conscious of its power and its endurance, supposed to be baffled and dethroned by Zeus, or *life;* and so on through all the elaborate theogonies of Greece and Egypt. They are no more than real insight into real phenomena, allegorized as time went on, elaborated by fancy, or idealized by imagination, but never losing their original character.

Thus paganism, in its very nature, was expansive, self-developing, and, as Mr Hume observed, tolerant; a new god was welcomed to the Pantheon as a new scientific discovery is welcomed by the Royal Society; and the various nations found no difficulty in interchanging their divinities—a new god either representing a new power not hitherto discovered, or one with which they were already familiar under a new name. With such a power of adaptation and enlargement, if there had been nothing more in it than this, such a system might have gone on accommodating itself to the change of times, and keeping pace with the growth of human character. Already in its later forms, as the unity of nature was more clearly observed, and the identity of nature throughout the known world, the separate powers were subordinating themselves to a single supreme king; and, as the poets had originally personified the elemental forces, the thinkers were reversing the earlier process, and discovering the law under the person. Happily or unhappily, however, what they could do for themselves they could not do for the

multitude. Phœbus and Aphrodite had been made too human to be allegorized. Humanized, and yet, we may say, only half-humanized, retaining their purely physical nature, and without any proper moral attribute at all, these gods and goddesses remained to the many examples of sensuality made beautiful; and, as soon as right and wrong came to have a meaning, it was impossible to worship any more these idealized despisers of it. The human caprices and passions which served at first to deepen the illusion, justly revenged themselves; paganism became a lie, and perished.

In the mean time, the Jews (and perhaps some other nations, but the Jews chiefly and principally) had been moving forward along a road wholly different. Breaking early away from the gods of nature, they advanced along the line of their moral consciousness; and leaving the nations to study physics, philosophy, and art, they confined themselves to man and to human life. Their theology grew up round the knowledge of good and evil, and God, with them, was the supreme Lord of the world, who stood towards man in the relation of a ruler and a judge. Holding such a faith, to them the toleration of paganism was an impossibility; the laws of nature might be many, but the law of conduct was one; there was one law and one king; and the conditions under which he governed the world, as embodied in the Decalogue or other similar code, were looked upon as iron and inflexible certainties, unalterable revelations of the will of an unalterable Being. So far there was little in common between this process and the other;

but it was identical with it in this one important feature, that moral knowledge, like physical, admitted of degrees; and the successive steps of it were only purchasable by experience. The dispensation of the law, in the language of modern theology, was not the dispensation of grace, and the nature of good and evil disclosed itself slowly as men were able to comprehend it. Thus, no system of law or articles of belief were or could be complete and exhaustive for all time. Experience accumulates; new facts are observed, new forces display themselves, and all such formulæ must necessarily be from period to period broken up and moulded afresh. And yet the steps already gained are a treasure so sacred, so liable are they at all times to be attacked by those lower and baser elements in our nature which it is their business to hold in check, that the better part of mankind have at all times practically regarded their creed as a sacred total to which nothing may be added, and from which nothing may be taken away; the suggestion of a new idea is resented as an encroachment, punished as an insidious piece of treason, and resisted by the combined forces of all common practical understandings, which know too well the value of what they have, to risk the venture upon untried change. Periods of religious transition, therefore, when the advance has been a real one, always have been violent, and probably will always continue to be so. They to whom the precious gift of fresh light has been given are called upon to exhibit their credentials as teachers in suffering for it. They, and those who oppose them, have alike a sacred

cause; and the fearful spectacle arises of earnest, vehement men contending against each other as for their own souls, in fiery struggle. Persecutions come, and martyrdoms, and religious wars; and, at last, the old faith, like the phœnix, expires upon its altar, and the new rises out of the ashes.

Such, in briefest outline, has been the history of religions, natural and moral; the first, indeed, being in no proper sense a religion at all, as we understand religion; and only assuming the character of it in the minds of great men whose moral sense had raised them beyond their time and country, and who, feeling the necessity of a real creed, with an effort and with indifferent success, endeavoured to express, under the systems which they found, emotions which had no proper place in them.

Of the transition periods which we have described as taking place under the religion which we call moral, the first known to us is marked at its opening by the appearance of the Book of Job, the first fierce collision of the new fact with the formula which will not stretch to cover it.

The earliest phenomenon likely to be observed connected with the moral government of the world is the general one, that on the whole, as things are constituted, good men prosper and are happy, bad men fail and are miserable. The cause of such a condition is no mystery, and lies very near the surface. As soon as men combine in society, they are forced to obey certain laws under which alone society is possible, and these laws, even in

their rudest form, approach the laws of conscience. To a certain extent, every one is obliged to sacrifice his private inclinations; and those who refuse to do so are punished, or are crushed. If society were perfect, the imperfect tendency would carry itself out till the two sets of laws were identical; but perfection so far has been only in Utopia, and, as far as we can judge by experience hitherto, they have approximated most nearly in the simplest and most rudimentary forms of life. Under the systems which we call patriarchal, the modern distinction between sins and crimes had no existence. All gross sins were offences against society, as it then was constituted, and, wherever it was possible, were punished as being so; chicanery and those subtle advantages which the acute and unscrupulous can take over the simple, without open breach of enacted statutes, became only possible under the complications of more artificial polities; and the oppression or injury of man by man was open, violent, obvious, and therefore easily understood. Doubtless, therefore, in such a state of things it would, on the whole, be true to experience that, judging merely by outward prosperity or the reverse, good and bad men would be rewarded and punished as such in this actual world; so far, that is, as the administration of such rewards and punishments was left in the power of mankind. But theology could not content itself with general tendencies. Theological propositions then, as much as now, were held to be absolute, universal, admitting of no exceptions, and explaining every phenomenon. Superficial generaliza-

tions were construed into immutable decrees; the God of this world was just and righteous, and temporal prosperity or wretchedness were dealt out by Him immediately by His own will to His subjects according to their behaviour. Thus the same disposition towards completeness which was the ruin of paganism, here, too, was found generating the same evils; the half truth rounding itself out with falsehoods. Not only the consequences of ill actions which followed through themselves, but the accidents, as we call them, of nature —earthquakes, storms, and pestilences—were the ministers of God's justice, and struck sinners only with discriminating accuracy. That the sun should shine alike on the evil and the good was a creed too high for the early divines, or that the victims of a fallen tower were no greater offenders than their neighbours. The conceptions of such men could not pass beyond the outward temporal consequence; and if God's hand was not there it was nowhere. We might have expected that such a theory of things could not long resist the accumulated contradictions of experience; but the same experience shows also what a marvellous power is in us of thrusting aside phenomena which interfere with our cherished convictions; and when such convictions are consecrated into a creed which it is a sacred duty to believe, experience is but like water dropping upon a rock, which wears it away, indeed, at last, but only in thousands of years. This theory was and is the central idea of the Jewish polity, the obstinate toughness of which has been the perplexity of Gentiles and Christians

from the first dawn of its existence; it lingers among ourselves in our Liturgy and in the popular belief; and in spite of the emphatic censure of Him after whose name we call ourselves, is still the instant interpreter for us of any unusual calamity, a potato blight, a famine, or an epidemic; such vitality is there in a moral faith, though now, at any rate, contradicted by the experience of all mankind, and at issue even with Christianity itself.

At what period in the world's history misgivings about it began to show themselves it is now impossible to say; it was at the close, probably, of the patriarchal period, when men who really *thought* must have found the ground palpably shaking under them. Indications of such misgivings are to be found in the Psalms, those especially passing under the name of Asaph; and all through Ecclesiastes there breathes a spirit of deepest and saddest scepticism. But Asaph thrusts his doubts aside, and forces himself back into his old position; and the scepticism of Ecclesiastes is confessedly that of a man who had gone wandering after enjoyment; searching after pleasures—pleasures of sense and pleasures of intellect—and who, at last, bears reluctant testimony that, by such methods, no pleasures can be found which will endure; that he had squandered the power which might have been used for better things, and had only strength remaining to tell his own sad tale as a warning to mankind. There is nothing in Ecclesiastes like the misgivings of a noble nature. The writer's own personal happiness had been all for which he had cared;

he had failed, as all men gifted as he was gifted are sure to fail, and the lights of heaven were extinguished by the disappointment with which his own spirit had been clouded.

Utterly different from these, both in character and in the lesson which it teaches, is the Book of Job. Of unknown date, as we said, and unknown authorship, the language impregnated with strange idioms and strange allusions, un-Jewish in form, and in fiercest hostility with Judaism, it hovers like a meteor over the old Hebrew literature, in it, but not of it, compelling the acknowledgment of itself by its own internal majesty, yet exerting no influence over the minds of the people, never alluded to, and scarcely ever quoted, till at last the light which it had heralded rose up full over the world in Christianity.

The conjectures which have been formed upon the date of this book are so various, that they show of themselves on how slight a foundation the best of them must rest. The language is no guide, for although unquestionably of Hebrew origin, the poem bears no analogy to any of the other books in the Bible; while of its external history nothing is known at all, except that it was received into the canon at the time of the great synagogue. Ewald decides, with some confidence, that it belongs to the great prophetic period, and that the writer was a contemporary of Jeremiah. Ewald is a nigh authority in these matters, and this opinion is the one which we believe is now commonly received among biblical scholars. In the absence of proof, however

(and the reasons which he brings forward are really no more than conjectures), these opposite considerations may be of moment. It is only natural that at first thought we should ascribe the grandest poem in a literature to the time at which the poetry of the nation to which it belongs was generally at its best; but, on reflection, the time when the poetry of prophecy is the richest, is not likely to be favourable to compositions of another kind. The prophets wrote in an era of decrepitude, dissolution, sin, and shame, when the glory of Israel was falling round them into ruin, and their mission, glowing as they were with the ancient spirit, was to rebuke, to warn, to threaten, and to promise. Finding themselves too late to save, and only, like Cassandra, despised and disregarded, their voices rise up singing the swan song of a dying people, now falling away in the wild wailing of despondency over the shameful and desperate present, now swelling in triumphant hope that God will not leave them for ever, and in His own time will take His chosen to Himself again. But such a period is an ill occasion for searching into the broad problems of human destiny; the present is all-important and all-absorbing; and such a book as that of Job could have arisen only out of an isolation of mind, and life, and interest, which we cannot conceive of as possible under such conditions.

The more it is studied, the more the conclusion forces itself upon us that, let the writer have lived when he would, in his struggle with the central falsehood of his own people's creed, he must have divorced himself from

them outwardly as well as inwardly; that he travelled away into the world, and lived long, perhaps all his matured life, in exile. Everything about the book speaks of a person who had broken free from the narrow littleness of 'the peculiar people.' The language, as we said, is full of strange words. The hero of the poem is of strange land and parentage—a Gentile certainly, not a Jew. The life, the manners, the customs are of all varieties and places—Egypt, with its river and its pyramids, is there; the description of mining points to Phœnicia; the settled life in cities, the nomad Arabs, the wandering caravans, the heat of the tropics, and the ice of the north, all are foreign to Canaan, speaking of foreign things and foreign people. No mention, or hint of mention, is there throughout the poem of Jewish traditions or Jewish certainties. We look to find the three friends vindicate themselves, as they so well might have done, by appeals to the fertile annals of Israel, to the Flood, to the cities of the plain, to the plagues of Egypt, or the thunders of Sinai. But of all this there is not a word; they are passed by as if they had no existence; and instead of them, when witnesses are required for the power of God, we have strange un-Hebrew stories of the eastern astronomic mythology, the old wars of the giants, the imprisoned Orion, the wounded dragon, 'the sweet influences of the seven stars,' and the glittering fragments of the sea-snake Rahab [1] trailing across the northern sky. Again,

[1] See Ewald on Job ix. 13, and xxvi. 14.

God is not the God of Israel, but the father of mankind: we hear nothing of a chosen people, nothing of a special revelation, nothing of peculiar privileges; and in the court of heaven there is a Satan, not the prince of this world and the enemy of God, but the angel of judgment, the accusing spirit whose mission was to walk to and fro over the earth, and carry up to heaven an account of the sins of mankind. We cannot believe that thoughts of this kind arose out of Jerusalem in the days of Josiah. In this book, if anywhere, we have the record of some *ἀνὴρ πολύτροπος* who, like the old hero of Ithaca,

> *πολλῶν ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,*
> *πολλὰ δ' ὅγ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν,*
> *ἀρνύμενος ψυχήν . . . . . .*

but the scenes, the names, and the incidents, are all contrived as if to baffle curiosity—as if, in the very form of the poem, to teach us that it is no story of a single thing which happened once, but that it belongs to humanity itself, and is the drama of the trial of man, with Almighty God and the angels as the spectators of it.

No reader can have failed to have been struck with the simplicity of the opening. Still, calm, and most majestic, it tells us everything which is necessary to be known in the fewest possible words. The history of Job was probably a tradition in the East; his name, like that of Priam in Greece, the symbol of fallen greatness, and his misfortunes the problem of philosophers. In keeping with the current belief, he is described as a model of excellence, the most perfect and upright man upon the earth, and the same was the greatest man in

all the east.' So far, greatness and goodness had gone hand in hand together, as the popular theory required. The details of his character are brought out in the progress of the poem. He was 'the father of the oppressed, and of those who had none to help them.' When he sat as a judge in the market-places, 'righteousness clothed him' there, and 'his justice was a robe and a diadem.' He 'broke the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth;' and, humble in the midst of his power, he 'did not despise the cause of his manservant, or his maidservant, when they contended with him,' knowing (and amidst those old people where the multitude of mankind were regarded as the born slaves of the powerful, to be carved into eunuchs or polluted into concubines at their master's pleasure, it was no easy matter to know it)—knowing that 'He who had made him had made them,' and *one* 'had fashioned them both in the womb.' Above all, he was the friend of the poor; 'the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him,' and he 'made the widow's heart to sing for joy.'

Setting these characteristics of his daily life by the side of his unaffected piety, as it is described in the first chapter, we have a picture of the best man who could then be conceived; not a hard ascetic, living in haughty or cowardly isolation, but a warm figure of flesh and blood, a man full of all human loveliness, and to whom, that no room might be left for any possible Calvinistic falsehood, God Himself bears the emphatic testimony, that 'there was none like him upon the earth, a perfect

and upright man, who feared God and eschewed evil.' If such a person as this, therefore, could be made miserable, necessarily the current belief of the Jews was false to the root; and tradition furnished the fact that he had been visited by every worst calamity. How was it then to be accounted for? Out of a thousand possible explanations, the poet introduces a single one. He admits us behind the veil which covers the ways of Providence, and we hear the accusing angel charging Job with an interested piety, and of being obedient because it was his policy. 'Job does not serve God for nought,' he says; 'strip him of his splendour, and see if he will care for God then. Humble him into poverty and wretchedness, so only we shall know what is in his heart.' The cause thus introduced is itself a rebuke to the belief which, with its 'rewards and punishments,' immediately fostered selfishness; and the poem opens with a double action, on one side to try the question whether it is possible for man to love God disinterestedly—the issue of which trial is not foreseen or even foretold, and we watch the progress of it with an anxious and fearful interest; on the other side, to bring out, in contrast to the truth which we already know, the cruel falsehood of the popular faith —to show how, instead of leading men to mercy and affection, it hardens their heart, narrows their sympathies, and enhances the trials of the sufferer, by refinements which even Satan had not anticipated. The combination of evils, as blow falls on blow, suddenly, swiftly, and terribly, has all the appearance of a pur-

posed visitation (as indeed it was); if ever outward incidents might with justice be interpreted as the immediate action of Providence, those which fell on Job might be so interpreted. The world turns disdainfully from the fallen in the world's way; but far worse than this, his chosen friends, wise, good, pious men, as wisdom and piety were then, without one glimpse of the true cause of his sufferings, see in them a judgment upon his secret sins. He becomes to them an illustration, and even (such are the paralogisms of men of this description) a proof of their theory that 'the prosperity of the wicked is but for a while;' and instead of the comfort and help which they might have brought him, and which in the end they were made to bring him, he is to them no more than a text for the enunciation of solemn falsehood. And even worse again, the sufferer himself had been educated in the same creed; he, too, had been taught to see the hand of God in the outward dispensation; and feeling from the bottom of his heart, that he, in his own case, was a sure contradiction of what he had learnt to believe, he himself finds his very faith in God shaken from its foundation. The worst evils which Satan had devised were distanced far by those which had been created by human folly.

The creed in which Job had believed was tried and found wanting, and, as it ever will be when the facts of experience come in contact with the inadequate formula, the true is found so mingled with the false, that they can hardly be disentangled, and are in danger of being swept away together.

A studied respect is shown, however, to orthodoxy, even while it is arraigned for judgment. It may be doubtful whether the writer purposely intended it. He probably cared only to tell the real truth; to say for the old theory the best which could be said, and to produce as its defenders the best and wisest men whom in his experience he had known to believe and defend it. At any rate, he represents the three friends, not as a weaker person would have represented them, as foolish, obstinate bigots, but as wise, humane, and almost great men, who, at the outset, at least, are animated only by the kindest feelings, and speak what they have to say with the most earnest conviction that it is true. Job is vehement, desperate, reckless. His language is the wild, natural outpouring of suffering. The friends, true to the eternal nature of man, are grave, solemn, and indignant, preaching their half truth, and mistaken only in supposing that it is the whole; speaking, as all such persons would speak and still do speak, in defending what they consider sacred truth against the assaults of folly and scepticism. How beautiful is their first introduction:—

'Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil which was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept, and they rent every one his mantle,

and sprinkled dust upon their heads towards heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him, for they saw that his grief was very great.'

What a picture is there! What majestic tenderness! His wife had scoffed at his faith, bidding him 'leave God and die.' His 'acquaintance had turned from him.' He 'had called his servant, and he had given him no answer.' Even the children, in their unconscious cruelty, had gathered round and mocked him as he lay among the ashes. But 'his friends sprinkle dust towards heaven, and sit silently by him, and weep for him seven days and seven nights upon the ground.' That is, they were true-hearted, truly loving, devout, religious men; and yet they, with their religion, were to become the instruments of the most poignant sufferings, the sharpest temptations, which he had to endure. So it was, and is, and will be—of such materials is this human life of ours composed.

And now, remembering the double action of the drama—the actual trial of Job, the result of which is uncertain; and the delusion of these men, which is, at the outset, certain—let us go rapidly through the dialogue. Satan's share in the temptation had already been overcome. Lying sick in the loathsome disease which had been sent upon him, his wife, in Satan's own words, had tempted Job to say, 'Farewell to God,'—think no more of God or goodness, since this was all which came of it; and Job had told her that she spoke as one of the foolish women. He 'had received good

at the hand of the Lord, and should he not receive evil?' But now, when real love and real affection appear, his heart melts in him; he loses his forced self-composure, and, bursts into a passionate regret that he had ever been born. In the agony of his sufferings, hope of better things had died away. He does not complain of injustice; as yet, and before his friends have stung and wounded him, he makes no questioning of Providence,—but why was life given to him at all, if only for this? Sick in mind, and sick in body, but one wish remains to him, that death will come quickly and end all. It is a cry from the very depths of a single and simple heart. But for such simplicity and singleness his friends could not give him credit; possessed beforehand with their idea, they see in his misery only a fatal witness against him; such calamities could not have befallen a man, the justice of God would not have permitted it, unless they had been deserved. Job had sinned and he had suffered, and this wild passion was but impenitence and rebellion.

Being as certain that they were right in this opinion as they were that God Himself existed, that they should speak what they felt was only natural and necessary; and their language at the outset is all which would be dictated by the tenderest sympathy. Eliphaz opens, the oldest and most important of the three, in a soft, subdued, suggestive strain, contriving in every way to spare the feelings of the sufferer, to the extreme to which his love will allow him. All is general, impersonal, indirect,—the rule of the world. the order of

Providence. He does not accuse Job, but he describes his calamities, and leaves him to gather for himself the occasion which had produced them; and then passes off, as if further to soften the blow, to the mysterious vision in which the infirmity of mortal nature had been revealed to him, the universal weakness which involved both the certainty that Job had shared in it, and the excuse for him, if he would confess and humble himself: the blessed virtue of repentance follows, and the promise that all shall be well.

This is the note on which each of the friends strikes successively, in the first of the three divisions into which the dialogue divides itself, but each with increasing peremptoriness and confidence, as Job, so far from accepting their interpretation of what had befallen him, hurls it from him in anger and disdain. Let us observe (and the Calvinists should consider this), he will hear as little of the charges against mankind as of charges against himself. He will not listen to the 'corruption of humanity,' because in the consciousness of his own innocency, he knows that it is not corrupt: he knows that he is himself just and good, and we know it, the Divine sentence upon him having been already passed. He will not acknowledge his sin, for he knows not of what to repent. If he could have reflected calmly, he might have foreseen what they would say. He knew all that as well as they: it was the old story which he had learnt, and could repeat, if necessary, as well as any one: and if it had been no more than a philosophical discussion, touching himself no more nearly than

it touched his friends, he might have allowed for the tenacity of opinion in such matters, and listened to it and replied to it with equanimity. But as the proverb says, 'It is ill talking between a full man and a fasting:' and in Job such equanimity would have been but Stoicism, or the affectation of it, and unreal as the others' theories. Possessed with the certainty that he had not deserved what had befallen him, harassed with doubt, and worn out with pain and unkindness, he had assumed (and how natural that he should assume it!) that those who loved him should not have been hasty to believe evil of him; he had spoken to them as he really felt, and he thought that he might have looked to them for something warmer and more sympathizing than such dreary eloquence. So when the revelation comes upon him of what was passing in them, he attributes it (and now he is unjust to them) to a falsehood of heart, and not to a blindness of understanding. Their sermons, so kindly intended, roll past him as a dismal mockery. They had been shocked (and how true again is this to nature!) at his passionate cry for death. 'Do ye reprove words?' he says, 'and the speeches of one that is desperate, which are as wind?' It was but poor friendship and narrow wisdom. He had looked to them for pity, for comfort, and love. He had longed for it as the parched caravans in the desert for the water-streams, and 'his brethren had dealt deceitfully with him.' The brooks, in the cool winter, roll in a full turbid torrent; 'what time it waxes warm they vanish, when it is hot they are consumed out of

their place; the caravans of Tema looked for them, the companies of Sheba waited for them; they were confounded because they had hoped; they came hither, and there was nothing.' If for once these poor men could have trusted their hearts, if for once they could have believed that there might be 'more things in heaven and earth' than were dreamt of in their philosophy—but this is the one thing which they could not do, which the theologian proper never has done or will do. And thus whatever of calmness or endurance Job alone, on his ash-heap, might have conquered for himself, is all scattered away; and as the strong gusts of passion sweep to and fro across his heart, he pours himself out in wild fitful music, so beautiful because so true, not answering them or their speeches, but now flinging them from him in scorn, now appealing to their mercy, or turning indignantly to God; now praying for death; now in perplexity doubting whether, in some mystic way which he cannot understand, he may not, perhaps, after all, really have sinned, and praying to be shown his fault; and then staggering further into the darkness, and breaking out into upbraidings of the Power which has become so dreadful an enigma to him. 'Thou inquirest after my iniquity, thou searchest after my sin, and thou knowest that I am not wicked. Why didst thou bring me forth out of the womb? Oh, that I had given up the ghost, and no eye had seen me. Cease, let me alone. It is but a little while that I have to live. Let me alone, that I may take comfort a little before I go, whence I shall

not return to the land of darkness and the shadow of death.' In what other poem in the world is there pathos deep as this? With experience so stern as his, it was not for Job to be calm, and self-possessed, and delicate in his words. He speaks not what he knows, but what he feels; and without fear the writer allows him to throw out his passion all genuine as it rises, not overmuch caring how nice ears might be offended, but contented to be true to the real emotion of a genuine human heart. So the poem runs on to the end of the first answer to Zophar.

But now, with admirable fitness, as the contest goes forward, the relative position of the speakers begins to change. Hitherto, Job only had been passionate; and his friends temperate and collected. Now, becoming shocked at his obstinacy, and disappointed in the result of their homilies, they stray still further from the truth in an endeavour to strengthen their position, and, as a natural consequence, visibly grow angry. To them, Job's vehement and desperate speeches are damning evidence of the truth of their suspicion. Impiety is added to his first sin, and they begin to see in him a rebel against God. At first they had been contented to speak generally, and much which they had urged was partially true; now they step forward to a direct application, and formally and personally accuse himself. Here their ground is positively false; and with delicate art it is they who are now growing violent, and wounded self-love begins to show behind their zeal for God; while in contrast to them, as there is less

and less truth in what they say, Job grows more and more collected. For a time it had seemed doubtful how he would endure his trial. The light of his faith was burning feebly and unsteadily; a little more, and it seemed as if it might have utterly gone out. But at last the storm was lulling; as the charges are brought personally home to him, the confidence in his own real innocence rises against them. He had before known that he was innocent; now he feels the strength which lies in innocence, as if God were beginning to reveal Himself within him, to prepare the way for the after outward manifestation of Himself.

The friends, as before, repeat one another with but little difference; the sameness being of course intentional, as showing that they were not speaking for themselves, but as representatives of a prevailing opinion. Eliphaz, again, gives the note which the others follow. Hear this Calvinist of the old world: 'Thy own mouth condemneth thee, and thine own lips testify against thee. What is man that he should be clean, and he that is born of a woman that he should be righteous? Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints; yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight; how much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?' Strange, that after all these thousands of years we should still persist in this degrading confession, as a thing which it is impious to deny and impious to attempt to render otherwise, when Scripture itself, in language so emphatic, declares that it is a lie. Job *is* innocent, perfect, righteous. God

Himself bears witness to it. It is Job who is found at last to have spoken truth, and the friends to have sinned in denying it. And he holds fast by his innocency, and with a generous confidence thrusts away the misgivings which had begun to cling to him. Among his complainings he had exclaimed, that God was remembering upon him the sins of his youth—not denying them; knowing well that he, like others, had gone astray before he had learnt to control himself, but feeling that at least in an earthly father it is unjust to visit the faults of childhood on the matured man; feeling that he had long, long shaken them off from him, and they did not even impair the probity of his after-life. But now these doubts, too, pass away in the brave certainty that God is not less just than man. As the denouncings grow louder and darker, he appeals from his narrow judges to the Supreme Tribunal—calls on God to hear him and to try his cause—and then, in the strength of this appeal the mist rises from before his eyes. His sickness is mortal; he has no hope in life, and death is near; but the intense feeling that justice must and will be done, holds to him closer and closer. God may appear on earth for him; or if that be too bold a hope, and death finds him as he is—what is death then? God will clear his memory in the place where he lived; his injuries will be righted over his grave; while for himself, like a sudden gleam of sunlight between clouds, a clear, bright hope beams up, that he too, then; in another life, if not in this, when his skin is wasted off his bones, and the worms have done their

work on the prison of his spirit, he too, at last, may then see God; may see Him, and have his pleadings heard.

With such a hope, or even the shadow of one, he turns back to the world again to look at it. Facts against which he had before closed his eyes he allows and confronts, and he sees that his own little experience is but the reflection of a law. You tell me, he seems to say, that the good are rewarded, and that the wicked are punished; that God is just, and that this is always so. Perhaps it is, or will be, but not in the way which you imagine. You have known me, you have known what my life has been; you see what I am, and it is no difficulty to you. You prefer believing that I, whom you call your friend, am a deceiver or a pretender, to admitting the possibility of the falsehood of your hypothesis. You will not listen to my assurance, and you are angry with me because I will not lie against my own soul, and acknowledge sins which I have not committed. You appeal to the course of the world in proof of your faith, and challenge me to answer you. Well, then, I accept your challenge. The world is not what you say. You have told me what you have seen of it: I will tell you what I have seen.

'Even while I remember I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold upon my flesh. Wherefore do the wicked become old, yea, and are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull

gendereth and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf. They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down into the grave. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have if we pray to Him?'

Will you quote the weary proverb? Will you say that 'God layeth up his iniquity for his children'? (Our translators have wholly lost the sense of this passage, and endeavour to make Job acknowledge what he is steadfastly denying.) Well, and what then? What will he care? 'Will his own eye see his own fall? Will he drink the wrath of the Almighty? What are the fortunes of his house to him if the number of his own months is fulfilled?' One man is good and another wicked, one is happy and another is miserable. In the great indifference of nature they share alike in the common lot. 'They lie down alike in the dust, and the worms cover them.'

Ewald, and many other critics, suppose that Job was hurried away by his feelings to say all this; and that in his calmer moments he must have felt that it was untrue. It is a point on which we must decline accepting even Ewald's high authority. Even then, in those old times, it was beginning to be terribly true. Even then the current theory was obliged to bend to

large exceptions; and what Job saw as exceptions we see round us everywhere. It was true then, it is infinitely more true now, that what is called virtue in the common sense of the word, still more that nobleness, godliness, or heroism of character in any form whatsoever, have nothing to do with this or that man's prosperity, or even happiness. The thoroughly vicious man is no doubt wretched enough; but the worldly, prudent, self-restraining man, with his five senses, which he understands how to gratify with tempered indulgence, with a conscience satisfied with the hack routine of what is called respectability,—such a man feels no wretchedness; no inward uneasiness disturbs him, no desires which he cannot gratify; and this though he be the basest and most contemptible slave of his own selfishness. Providence will not interfere to punish him. Let him obey the laws under which prosperity is obtainable, and he will obtain it, let him never fear. He will obtain it, be he base or noble. Nature is indifferent; the famine and the earthquake, and the blight or the accident, will not discriminate to strike him. He may insure himself against casualties in these days of ours, with the money perhaps which a better man would have given away, and he will have his reward. He need not doubt it.

And, again, it is not true, as optimists would persuade us, that such prosperity brings no real pleasure. A man with no high aspirations, who thrives, and makes money, and envelops himself in comforts, is as happy as such a nature can be. If unbroken satis-

faction be the most blessed state for a man (and this certainly is the practical notion of happiness), he is the happiest of men. Nor are those idle phrases any truer, that the good man's goodness is a never-ceasing sunshine; that virtue is its own reward, &c. &c. If men truly virtuous care to be rewarded for it, their virtue is but a poor investment of their moral capital. Was Job so happy then on that ash-heap of his, the mark of the world's scorn, and the butt for the spiritual archery of the theologian, alone in his forlorn nakedness, like some old dreary stump which the lightning has scathed, rotting away in the wind and the rain? If happiness be indeed what we men are sent into this world to seek for, those hitherto thought the noblest among us were the pitifullest and wretchedest. Surely it was no error in Job. It was that real insight which once was given to all the world in Christianity, however we have forgotten it now. Job was learning to see that it was not in the possession of enjoyment, no, nor of happiness itself, that the difference lies between the good and the bad. True, it might be that God sometimes, even generally, gives such happiness—gives it in what Aristotle calls an ἐπιγιγνόμενον τέλος, but it is no part of the terms on which He admits us to His service, still less is it the end which we may propose to ourselves on entering His service. Happiness He gives to whom He will, or leaves to the angel of nature to distribute among those who fulfil the laws upon which *it* depends. But to serve God and to love Him is higher and better than happiness, though it be with

wounded feet, and bleeding brows, and hearts loaded with sorrow.

Into this high faith Job is rising, treading his temptations under his feet, and finding in them a ladder on which his spirit rises. Thus he is passing further and even further from his friends, soaring where their imaginations cannot follow him. To them he is a blasphemer whom they gaze at with awe and terror. They had charged him with sinning on the strength of their hypothesis, and he has answered with a deliberate denial of it. Losing now all mastery over themselves, they pour out a torrent of mere extravagant invective and baseless falsehood, which in the calmer outset they would have blushed to think of. They *know* no evil of Job, but they do not hesitate to convert conjecture into certainty, and specify in detail the particular crimes which he must have committed. He *ought* to have committed them, and so he had; the old argument then as now.—'Is not thy wickedness great?' says Eliphaz. 'Thou hast taken a pledge from thy brother for nought, and stripped the naked of their clothing; thou hast not given water to the weary, and thou hast withholden bread from the hungry;' and so on through a series of mere distracted lies. But the time was past when words like these could make Job angry. Bildad follows them up with an attempt to frighten him by a picture of the power of that God whom he was blaspheming; but Job cuts short his harangue, and ends it for him in a spirit of loftiness which Bildad could not have approached; and then

proudly and calmly rebukes them all, no longer in scorn and irony, but in high, tranquil self-possession. 'God forbid that I should justify you,' he says; 'till I die I will not remove my integrity from me. My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go. My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.'

So far all has been clear, each party, with increasing confidence, having insisted on their own position, and denounced their adversaries. A difficulty now arises which, at first sight, appears insurmountable. As the chapters are at present printed, the entire of the twenty-seventh is assigned to Job, and the paragraph from the eleventh to the twenty-third verses is in direct contradiction to all which he has maintained before—is, in fact, a concession of having been wrong from the beginning. Ewald, who, as we said above, himself refuses to allow the truth of Job's last and highest position, supposes that he is here receding from it, and confessing what an over-precipitate passion had betrayed him into denying. For many reasons, principally because we are satisfied that Job said then no more than the real fact, we cannot think Ewald right; and the concessions are too large and too inconsistent to be reconciled even with his own general theory of the poem. Another solution of the difficulty is very simple, although it is to be admitted that it rather cuts the knot than unties it. Eliphaz and Bildad have each spoken a third time; the symmetry of the general form requires that now Zophar should speak; and the suggestion, we believe, was first

made by Dr Kennicott, that he did speak, and that the verses in question belong to him. Any one who is accustomed to MSS. will understand easily how such a mistake, if it be one, might have arisen. Even in Shakespeare, the speeches in the early editions are in many instances wrongly divided, and assigned to the wrong persons. It might have arisen from inadvertence; it might have arisen from the foolishness of some Jewish transcriber, who resolved, at all costs, to drag the book into harmony with Judaism, and make Job unsay his heresy. This view has the merit of fully clearing up the obscurity. Another, however, has been suggested by Eichorn, who originally followed Kennicott, but discovered, as he supposed, a less violent hypothesis, which was equally satisfactory. Eichorn imagines the verses to be a summary by Job of his adversaries' opinions, as if he said—'Listen now; you know what the facts are as well as I, and yet you maintain this;' and then passed on with his indirect reply to it. It is possible that Eichorn may be right—at any rate, either he is right, or else Dr Kennicott is. Certainly, Ewald is not. Taken as an account of Job's own conviction, the passage contradicts the burden of the whole poem. Passing it by, therefore, and going to what immediately follows, we arrive at what, in a human sense, is the final climax—Job's victory and triumph. He had appealed to God, and God had not appeared; he had doubted and fought against his doubts, and at last had crushed them down. He, too, had been taught to look for God in outward judg-

ments; and when his own experience had shown him his mistake, he knew not where to turn. He had been leaning on a bruised reed, and it had run into his hand and pierced him. But as soon as in the speeches of his friend he saw it all laid down in its weakness and its false conclusions—when he saw the defenders of it wandering further and further from what he knew to be true, growing every moment, as if from a consciousness of the unsoundness of their standing ground, more violent, obstinate, and unreasonable, the scales fell more and more from his eyes—he had seen the fact that the wicked might prosper, and in learning to depend upon his innocency he had felt that the good man's support was there, if it was anywhere; and at last, with all his heart, was reconciled to the truth. The mystery of the outer world becomes deeper to him, but he does not any more try to understand it. The wisdom which can compass that mystery, he knows, is not in man, though man search for it deeper and harder than the miner searches for the hidden treasures of the earth; the wisdom which alone is attainable is resignation to God.

'Where,' he cries, 'shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth said it is not with me; and the sea said it is not in me. It is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of the air.[1] God

[1] An allusion, perhaps, to the old bird auguries. The birds, as the in-

understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof [He, not man, understands the mysteries of the world which He has made]. And unto man He said, Behold! the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, that is understanding.'

Here, therefore, it might seem as if all was over. There is no clearer or purer faith possible for man; and Job had achieved it. His evil had turned to good; and sorrow had severed for him the last links which bound him to lower things. He had felt that he could do without happiness, that it was no longer essential, and that he could live on, and still love God, and cling to Him. But he is not described as of preternatural, or at all Titanic nature, but as very man, full of all human tenderness and susceptibility. His old life was still beautiful to him. He does not hate it because he can renounce it; and now that the struggle is over, the battle fought and won, and his heart has flowed over in that magnificent song of victory, the note once more changes: he turns back to earth to linger over those old departed days, with which the present is so hard a contrast; and his parable dies away in a strain of plaintive, but resigned melancholy. Once more he throws himself on God, no longer in passionate expostulation, but in pleading humility.[1] And then comes (perhaps,

habitants of the air, were supposed to be the messengers between heaven and earth.

[1] The speech of Elihu, which lies between Job's last words and God's appearance, is now decisively pronounced by Hebrew scholars not to be genuine. The most superficial reader will have been perplexed by the introduction of a speaker to whom

as Ewald says, it *could not* have come before) the answer out of the whirlwind. Job had called on God, and prayed that He might appear, that he might plead his cause with Him; and now He comes, and what will Job do? He comes not as the healing spirit in the heart of man; but, as Job had at first demanded, the outward God, the Almighty Creator of the universe, and clad in the terrors and the glory of it. Job, in his first precipitancy, had desired to reason with Him on His government. The poet, in gleaming lines, describes for an answer the universe as it then was known, the majesty and awfulness of it; and then asks whether it is this which he requires to have explained to him, or which he believes himself capable of conducting. The revelation acts on Job as the sign of the Macrocosmos on the modern Faust; but when he sinks, crushed, it is not as the rebellious upstart, struck down in his pride—

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no allusion is made, either in the prologue or the epilogue; by a long dissertation, which adds nothing to the progress of the argument, proceeding evidently on the false hypothesis of the three friends, and betraying not the faintest conception of the real cause of Job's sufferings. And the suspicions which such an anomaly would naturally suggest, are now made certainties by a fuller knowledge of the language, and the detection of a different hand. The interpolator has unconsciously confessed the feeling which allowed him to take so great a liberty. He, too, possessed with the old Jew theory, was unable to accept in its fulness so great a contradiction to it: and, missing the spirit of the poem, he believed that God's honour could still be vindicated in the old way. 'His wrath was kindled' against the friends, because they could not answer Job; and against Job, because he would not be answered; and conceiving himself 'full of matter,' and 'ready to burst like new bottles,' he could not contain himself, and delivered into the text a sermon on the *Theodice*, such, we suppose, as formed the current doctrine of the time in which he lived.

for he had himself, partially at least, subdued his own presumption—but as a humble penitent, struggling to overcome his weakness. He abhors himself for his murmurs, and 'repents in dust and ashes.' It will have occurred to every one that the secret which has been revealed to the reader is not, after all, revealed to Job or to his friends, and for this plain reason: the burden of the drama is, not that we do, but that we do not, and cannot, know the mystery of the government of the world—that it is not for man to seek it, or for God to reveal it. We, the readers, are, in this one instance, admitted behind the scenes—for once, in this single case—because it was necessary to meet the received theory by a positive fact which contradicted it. But the explanation of one case need not be the explanation of another; our business is to do what we know to be right and ask no questions. The veil which in the Ægyptian legend lay before the face of Isis is not to be raised; and we are not to seek to penetrate secrets which are not ours.

While, however, God does not condescend to justify His ways to man, He gives judgment on the past controversy. The self-constituted pleaders for Him, the acceptors of His person, were all wrong; and Job—the passionate, vehement, scornful, misbelieving Job—he had spoken the truth; he at least had spoken facts, and they had been defending a transient theory as an everlasting truth.

'And it was so, that after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the

Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee and against thy two friends; for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job; and offer for yourselves a burnt-offering. And my servant Job shall pray for you, and him will I accept. Lest I deal with you after your folly, for that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job.'

One act of justice remains. Knowing as we do the cause of Job's misfortunes, and that as soon as his trial was over it was no longer operative, our sense of fitness could not be satisfied unless he were indemnified outwardly for his outward sufferings. Satan is defeated, and Job's integrity proved; and there is no reason why the general law should be interfered with, which, however large the exceptions, tends to connect goodness and prosperity; or why obvious calamities, obviously undeserved, should remain any more unremoved. Perhaps, too, a deeper lesson still lies below his restoration —something perhaps of this kind. Prosperity, enjoyment, happiness, comfort, peace, whatever be the name by which we designate that state in which life is to our own selves pleasant and delightful, as long as they are sought or prized as things essential, so far have a tendency to disennoble our nature, and are a sign that we are still in servitude to selfishness. Only when they lie outside us, as ornaments merely to be worn or laid aside as God pleases—only then may such things be possessed with impunity. Job's heart in early times

had clung to them more than he knew, but now he was purged clean, and they were restored because he had ceased to need them.

Such in outline is this wonderful poem. With the material of which it is woven we have not here been concerned, although it is so rich and pregnant that we might with little difficulty construct out of it a complete picture of the world as then it was: its life, knowledge, arts, habits, superstitions, hopes, and fears. The subject is the problem of all mankind, and the composition embraces no less wide a range. But what we are here most interested upon is the epoch which it marks in the progress of mankind, as the first recorded struggle of a new experience with an established orthodox belief. True, for hundreds of years, perhaps for a thousand, the superstition against which it was directed continued. When Christ came it was still in its vitality. Nay, as we saw, it is alive, or in a sort of mock life, among us at this very day. But even those who retained their imperfect belief had received into their canon a book which treated it with contumely and scorn, so irresistible was the majesty of truth.

In days like these, when we hear so much of progress, it is worth while to ask ourselves what advances we have made further in the same direction? and once more, at the risk of some repetition, let us look at the position in which this book leaves us. It had been assumed that man, if he lived a just and upright life, had a right to expect to be happy. Happiness, 'his being's end and aim,' was his legitimate and covenanted

reward. If God therefore was just, such a man would be happy; and inasmuch as God was just, the man who was not happy had not deserved to be. There is no flaw in this argument; and if it is unsound, the fallacy can only lie in the supposed right to happiness. It is idle to talk of inward consolations. Job felt them, but they were not everything. They did not relieve the anguish of his wounds; they did *not* make the loss of his children, or his friends' unkindness, any the less painful to him.

The poet, indeed, restores him in the book; but in life it need not have been so. He might have died upon his ash-heap, as thousands of good men have died, and will die again, in misery. Happiness, therefore, is *not* what we are to look for. Our place is to be true to the best which we know, to seek that and do that; and if by 'virtue its own reward' be meant that the good man cares only to continue good, desiring nothing more, then it is a true and noble saying. But if virtue be valued because it is politic, because in pursuit of it will be found most enjoyment and fewest sufferings, then it is not noble any more, and it is turning the truth of God into a lie. Let us do right, and whether happiness come or unhappiness it is no very mighty matter. If it come, life will be sweet; if it do not come, life will be bitter —bitter, not sweet, and yet to be borne. On such a theory alone is the government of this world intelligibly just. The well-being of our souls depends only on what we *are;* and nobleness of character is nothing else but steady love of good and steady scorn of evil.

The government of the world is a problem while the desire of selfish enjoyment survives; and when justice is not done according to such standard (which will not be till the day after doomsday, and not then), self-loving men will still ask, why? and find no answer. Only to those who have the heart to say, 'We can do without that; it is not what we ask or desire,' is there no secret. Man will have what he deserves, and will find what is really best for him, exactly as he honestly seeks for it. Happiness may fly away, pleasure pall or cease to be obtainable, wealth decay, friends fail or prove unkind, and fame turn to infamy; but the power to serve God never fails, and the love of Him is never rejected.

Most of us, at one time or other of our lives, have known something of love—of that only pure love in which no *self* is left remaining. We have loved as children, we have loved as lovers; some of us have learnt to love a cause, a faith, a country; and what love would that be which existed only with a prudent view to after-interests. Surely there is a love which exults in the power of self-abandonment, and can glory in the privilege of suffering for what is good. *Que mon nom soit flétri, pourvu que la France soit libre*, said Danton; and those wild patriots who had trampled into scorn the faith in an immortal life in which they would be rewarded for what they were suffering, went to their graves as beds, for the dream of a people's liberty. Justice is done; the balance is not deranged. It only seems deranged, as long as we have not learnt to serve without looking to be paid for it.

Such is the theory of life which is to be found in the Book of Job; a faith which has flashed up in all times and all lands, wherever high-minded men were to be found, and which passed in Christianity into the acknowledged creed of half the world. The cross was the new symbol, the Divine sufferer the great example; and mankind answered to the call, because the appeal was not to what was poor and selfish in them, but to whatever of best and bravest was in their nature. The law of reward and punishment was superseded by the law of love. Thou shalt love God and thou shalt love man; and that was not love—man knew it once—which was bought by the prospect of reward. Times are changed with us now. Thou shalt love God and thou shalt love man, in the hands of a Paley, are found to mean no more than, Thou shalt love thyself after an enlightened manner. And the same base tone has saturated not only our common feelings, but our Christian theologies and our Antichristian philosophies. A prudent regard to our future interests; an abstinence from present unlawful pleasures, because they will entail the loss of greater pleasure by-and-by, or perhaps be paid for with pain,—this is called virtue now; and the belief that such beings as men can be influenced by any more elevated feelings, is smiled at as the dream of enthusiasts whose hearts have outrun their understandings. Indeed, he were but a poor lover whose devotion to his mistress lay resting on the feeling that a marriage with her would conduce to his own comforts. That were a poor patriot who served his country for the

hire which his country would give to him. And we should think but poorly of a son who thus addressed his earthly father: 'Father, on whom my fortunes depend, teach me to do what pleases thee, that I, pleasing thee in all things, may obtain those good things which thou hast promised to give to thy obedient children.' If any of us who have lived in so meagre a faith venture, by-and-by, to put in our claims, Satan will be likely to say of us (with better reason than he did of Job), 'Did they serve God for nought, then? Take their reward from them, and they will curse Him to His face.' If Christianity had never borne itself more loftily than this, do we suppose that those fierce Norsemen who had learnt, in the fiery war-songs of the Edda, of what stuff the hearts of heroes are composed, would have fashioned their sword-hilts into crosses, and themselves into a crusading chivalry? Let us not dishonour our great fathers with the dream of it. The Christians, like the Stoics and the Epicureans, would have lived their little day among the ignoble sects of an effete civilization, and would have passed off and been heard of no more. It was in another spirit that those first preachers of righteousness went out upon their warfare with evil. They preached, not enlightened prudence, but purity, justice, goodness; holding out no promises in this world except of suffering as their great Master had suffered, and rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer for his sake. And that crown of glory which they did believe to await them in a life beyond the grave, was no enjoyment of what they had surrendered in life, was not enjoyment

at all in any sense which human thought or language can attach to the words; as little like it as the crown of love is like it, which the true lover looks for when at last he obtains his mistress. It was to be with Christ —to lose themselves in Him.

How these high feelings ebbed away, and Christianity became what we know it, we are partially beginning to see. The living spirit organized for itself a body of perishable flesh: not only the real gains of real experience, but mere conjectural hypotheses, current at the day for the solution of unexplained phenomena, became formulæ and articles of faith. Again, as before, the living and the dead were bound together, and the seeds of decay were already planted on the birth of a constructed polity.

But there was another cause allied to this, and yet different from it, which, though a law of human nature itself, seems now-a-days altogether forgotten. In the rapid and steady advance of our knowledge of material things, we are apt to believe that all our knowledge follows the same law; that it is merely generalized experience; that experience accumulates daily, and, therefore, that 'progress of the species,' *in all senses*, is an obvious and necessary fact. There is something which is true in this view, mixed with a great deal which is false. Material knowledge, the physical and mechanical sciences, make their way from step to step, from experiment to experiment, and each advance is secured and made good, and cannot again be lost. One generation takes up the general sum of experience

where the last laid it down, adds to it what it has the opportunity of adding, and leaves it with interest to the next. The successive positions, as they are gained, require nothing for the apprehension of them but an understanding ordinarily cultivated. Prejudices have to be encountered, but prejudices of opinion merely, not prejudices of conscience or prejudices of self-love, like those which beset our progress in the science of morality. But in morals we enter upon conditions wholly different —conditions in which age differs from age, man differs from man, and even from himself, at different moments. We all have experienced times when, as we say, we should not know ourselves; some, when we fall below our average level; some, when we are lifted above, and put on, as it were, a higher nature. At such intervals as these last (unfortunately, with most of us, of rare occurrence), many things become clear to us which before were hard sayings; propositions become alive which, usually, are but dry words; our hearts seem purer, our motives loftier; our purposes, what we are proud to acknowledge to ourselves.

And, as man is unequal to himself, so is man to his neighbour, and period to period. The entire method of action, the theories of human life which in one era prevail universally, to the next are unpractical and insane, as those of this next would have seemed mere baseness to the first, if the first could have anticipated them. One epoch, we may suppose, holds some 'greatest nobleness principle,' the other some 'greatest happiness principle;' and then their very systems of axioms

will contradict one another; their general conceptions and their detailed interpretations, their rules, judgments, opinions, practices will be in perpetual and endless collision. Our minds take shape from our hearts, and the facts of moral experience do not teach their own meaning, but submit to many readings according to the power of the eye which we bring with us

The want of a clear perception of so important a feature about us leads to many singular contradictions. A believer in popular Protestantism, who is also a believer in progress, ought, if he were consistent, to regard mankind as growing every day towards a more and more advantageous position with respect to the trials of life; and yet if he were asked whether it was easier for him to 'save his soul' in the nineteenth century than it would have been in the first or second, or whether the said soul was necessarily better worth saving, he would be perplexed for an answer. There is hardly one of us who, in childhood, has not felt like the Jews to whom Christ spoke, that if he had 'lived in the days of the Fathers,' if he had had their advantages, he would have found duty a much easier matter; and some of us in mature life have felt that in old Athens, or old republican Rome, in the first ages of Christianity, in the Crusades, or at the Reformation, there was a contagious atmosphere of heroism, in which we should have been less troubled with the little feelings which cling about us now. At any rate, it is at these rare epochs only that real additions are made to our moral knowledge. At such times, new truths are, indeed, sent

down among us, and, for periods longer or shorter, may be seen to exercise an elevating influence on mankind. Perhaps what is gained on these occasions is never entirely lost. The historical monuments of their effects are at least indestructible; and when the spirit which gave them birth reappears, their dormant energy awakens again.

But it seems from our present experience of what, in some at least of its modern forms, Christianity has been capable of becoming, that there is no doctrine in itself so pure, but what the meaner nature which is in us can disarm and distort it, and adapt it to its own littleness. The once living spirit drives up into formulæ, and formulæ, whether of mass-sacrifice or vicarious righteousness, or 'reward and punishment,' are contrived ever so as to escape making over-high demands upon the conscience. Some aim at dispensing with obedience altogether, and those which insist on obedience rest the obligations of it on the poorest of motives. So things go on till there is no life left at all; till, from all higher aspirations, we are lowered down to the love of self after an enlightened manner; and then nothing remains but to fight the battle over again. The once beneficial truth has become, as in Job's case, a cruel and mischievous deception, and the whole question of life and its obligations must again be opened.

It is now some three centuries since the last of such re-openings. If we ask ourselves how much during this time has been actually added to the sum of our knowledge in these matters; what, in all the thousands

upon thousands of sermons, and theologies, and philosophies with which Europe has been deluged, has been gained for mankind beyond what we have found in this Book of Job, how far all this has advanced us in the 'progress of humanity,' it were hard, or rather it is easy, to answer. How far we have fallen below, let Paley and the rest bear witness. But what moral question can be asked which admits now of a grander solution than was offered two, perhaps three, thousand years ago? The world has not been standing still; experience of man and life has increased; questions have multiplied on questions, while the answers of the established teachers to them have been growing every day more and more incredible. What other answers have there been? Of all the countless books which have appeared, there has been only one of enduring importance, in which an attempt is made to carry on the solution of the great problem. Job is given over into Satan's hand to be tempted; and though he shakes, he does not fall. Taking the temptation of Job for his model, Goethe has similarly exposed his Faust to trial, and with him the tempter succeeds. His hero falls from sin to sin, from crime to crime; he becomes a seducer, a murderer, a betrayer, following recklessly his evil angel wherever he chooses to lead him; and yet, with all this, he never wholly forfeits our sympathy. In spite of his weakness, his heart is still true to his higher nature; sick and restless, even in the delirium of enjoyment he always longs for something better, and he never can be brought to say of evil that it is good.

And therefore, after all, the devil is baulked of his prey; in virtue of this one fact, that the evil in which he steeped himself remained to the last hateful to him, Faust is saved by the angels. . . It will be eagerly answered for the established belief, that such cases are its especial province. All men are sinners, and *it* possesses the blessed remedy for sin. But, among the countless numbers of those characters so strangely mixed among us, in which the dark and the bright fibres cross like a mesh-work; characters at one moment capable of acts of heroic greatness, at another hurried by temptation into actions which even common men may deplore, how many are there who have never availed themselves of the conditions of reconciliation as orthodoxy proffers them, and of such men what is to be said? It was said once of a sinner that to her 'much was forgiven, for she loved much.' But this is language which theology has as little appropriated as the Jews could appropriate the language of Job. It cannot recognize the power of the human heart. It has no balance in which to weigh the good against the evil; and when a great Burns or a Mirabeau comes before it, it can but tremblingly count up the offences committed, and then, looking to the end, and finding its own terms not to have been complied with, it faintly mutters its anathema. Sin only it can apprehend and judge; and for the poor acts of struggling heroism, 'Forasmuch as they were not done,' &c., &c., it doubts not but they have the nature of sin.[1]

[1] See the Thirteenth Article.

Something of the difficulty has been met by Goethe, but it cannot be said that he has resolved it; or at least that he has furnished others with a solution which may guide their judgment. In the writer of the Book of Job there is an awful moral earnestness before which we bend as in the presence of a superior being. The orthodoxy against which he contended is not set aside or denied; he sees what truth is in it; only he sees more than it, and over it, and through it. But in Goethe, who needed it more, inasmuch as his problem was more delicate and difficult, the moral earnestness is not awful, is not even high. We cannot feel that in dealing with sin he entertains any great horror of it; he looks on it as a mistake, as undesirable, but scarcely as more. Goethe's great powers are of another kind; and this particular question, though in appearance the primary subject of the poem, is really only secondary. In substance, Faust is more like Ecclesiastes than it is like Job, and describes rather the restlessness of a largely-gifted nature which, missing the guidance of the heart, plays experiments with life, trying knowledge, pleasure, dissipation, one after another, and hating them all; and then hating life itself as a weary, stale, flat, unprofitable mockery. The temper exhibited here will probably be perennial in the world. But the remedy for it will scarcely be more clear under other circumstances than it is at present, and lies in the disposition of the emotions, and not in any propositions which can be addressed to the understanding.

For that other question—how rightly to estimate a

human being; what constitutes a real vitiation of character, and how to distinguish, without either denying the good or making light of the evil; how to be just to the popular theories, and yet not to blind ourselves to their shallowness and injustice—that is a problem for us, for the solution of which we are at present left to our ordinary instinct, without any recognized guidance whatsoever.

Nor is this the only problem which is in the same situation. There can scarcely be a more startling contrast between fact and theory than the conditions under which, practically, positions of power and influence are distributed among us—between the theory of human worth which the necessities of life oblige us to act upon, and the theory which we believe that we believe. As we look around among our leading men, our statesmen, our legislators, the judges on our bench, the commanders of our armies, the men to whom this English nation commits the conduct of its best interests, profane and sacred, what do we see to be the principles which guide our selection? How entirely do they lie beside and beyond the negative tests! and how little respect do we pay to the breach of this or that commandment in comparison with ability! So wholly impossible is it to apply the received opinions on such matters to practice—to treat men known to be guilty of what theology calls deadly sins, as really guilty of them, that it would almost seem we had fallen into a moral anarchy; that ability *alone* is what we regard, without any reference at all, except in glaring and

outrageous cases, to moral disqualifications. It is invidious to mention names of living men; it is worse than invidious to drag out of their graves men who have gone down into them with honour, to make a point for an argument. But we know, all of us, that among the best servants of our country there have been, and there are, many whose lives will not stand scrutiny by the negative tests, and who do not appear very greatly to repent, or to have repented, of their sins according to recognized methods.

Once more: among our daily or weekly confessions, which we are supposed to repeat as if we were all of us at all times in precisely the same moral condition, we are made to say that we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and to have left undone those things which we ought to have done. An earthly father to whom his children were day after day to make this acknowledgment would be apt to inquire whether they were trying to do better—whether, at any rate, they were endeavouring to learn; and if he were told that although they had made some faint attempts to understand the negative part of their duty, yet that of the positive part, of those things which they ought to do, they had no notions at all, and had no idea that they were under obligation to form any, he would come to rather strange conclusions about them. But, really and truly, what practical notions of duty have we beyond that of abstaining from committing sins? Not to commit sin, we suppose, covers but a small part of what is expected of us. Through the entire tissue of

our employments there runs a good and a bad. Bishop Butler tells us, for instance, that even of our time there is a portion which is ours, and a portion which is our neighbour's; and if we spend more of it on personal interests than our own share, we are stealing. This sounds strange doctrine; we prefer making vague acknowledgments, and shrink from pursuing them into detail. We say vaguely, that in all we do we should consecrate ourselves to God, and our own lips condemn us; for which among us cares to learn the way to do it? The *devoir* of a knight was understood in the courts of chivalry; the lives of heroic men, Pagan and Christian, were once held up before the world as patterns of detailed imitation; and now, when such ideals are wanted more than ever, Protestantism stands with a drawn sword on the threshold of the inquiry, and tells us that it is impious. The law, we are told, has been fulfilled for us in condescension to our inherent worthlessness, and our business is to appropriate another's righteousness, and not, like Titans, to be scaling heaven by profane efforts of our own. Protestants, we know very well, will cry out in tones loud enough at such a representation of their doctrines. But we know also that unless men may feel a cheerful conviction that they can do right if they try,—that they can purify themselves, can live noble and worthy lives,—unless this is set before them as *the* thing which they are to do, and *can* succeed in doing, they will not waste their energies on what they know beforehand

will end in failure; and if they may not live for God, they will live for themselves.

And all this while the whole complex frame of society is a meshwork of duty woven of living fibre, and the condition of its remaining sound is, that every thread of it, of its own free energy, shall do what it ought. The penalties of duties neglected are to the full as terrible as those of sins committed; more terrible, perhaps, because more palpable and sure. A lord of the land, or an employer of labour, supposes that he has no duty except to keep what he calls the commandments in his own person, to go to church, and to do what he will with his own,—and Irish famines follow, and trade strikes, and chartisms, and Paris revolutions. We look for a remedy in impossible legislative enactments, and there is but one remedy which will avail—that the thing which we call public opinion learn something of the meaning of human obligation, and demand some approximation to it. As things are, we have no idea of what a human being ought to be. After the first rudimental conditions we pass at once into meaningless generalities; and with no knowledge to guide our judgment, we allow it to be guided by meaner principles; we respect money, we respect rank, we respect ability—character is as if it had no existence.

In the midst of this loud talk of progress, therefore, in which so many of us at present are agreed to believe, which is, indeed, the common meeting point of all the thousand sects into which we are split, it is with

saddened feelings that we see so little of it in so large a matter. Progress there is in knowledge; and science has enabled the number of human beings capable of existing upon this earth to be indefinitely multiplied. But this is but a small triumph if the ratio of the good and bad, the wise and the foolish, the full and the hungry, remains unaffected. And we cheat ourselves with words when we conclude out of our material splendour an advance of the race.

In two things there is progress—progress in knowledge of the outward world, and progress in material wealth. This last, for the present, creates, perhaps, more evils than it relieves; but suppose this difficulty solved—suppose the wealth distributed, and every peasant living like a peer—what then? If this is all, one noble soul outweighs the whole of it. Let us follow knowledge to the outer circle of the universe—the eye will not be satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing. Let us build our streets of gold and they will hide as many aching hearts as hovels of straw. The well-being of mankind is not advanced a single step. Knowledge is power, and wealth is power; and harnessed, as in Plato's fable, to the chariot of the soul, and guided by wisdom, they may bear it through the circle of the stars; but left to their own guidance, or reined by a fool's hand, the wild horses may bring the poor fool to Phaeton's end, and set a world on fire.

SPINOZA.

Benedicti de Spinoza Tractatus de Deo et Homine ejusque Felicitate Lineamenta, atque Annotationes ad Tractatum Theologico-Politicum, edidit et illustravit EDWARDUS BOEHMER. Halæ ad Salam. J. F. Lippert. 1852.

THIS little volume is one evidence among many of the interest which continues to be felt by the German students in Spinoza. The actual merit of the book itself is little or nothing; but it shows the industry with which they are gleaning among the libraries of Holland for any traces of him which they can recover; and the smallest fragments of his writings are acquiring that factitious importance which attaches to the most insignificant relics of acknowledged greatness. Such industry cannot be otherwise than laudable, but we do not think it at present altogether wisely directed. Nothing is likely to be brought to light which will further illustrate Spinoza's philosophy. He himself

[1] *Westminster Review*, 1854.

spent the better part of his life in clearing his language of ambiguities; and such earlier sketches of his system as are supposed still to be extant in MS., and a specimen of which M. Boehmer believes himself to have discovered, contribute only obscurity to what is in no need of additional difficulty. Of Spinoza's private history, on the contrary, rich as it must have been, and abundant traces of it as must be extant somewhere in his own and his friends' correspondence, we know only enough to feel how vast a chasm remains to be filled. It is not often that any man in this world lives a life so well worth writing as Spinoza lived; not for striking incidents or large events connected with it, but because (and no sympathy with his peculiar opinions disposes us to exaggerate his merit) he was one of the very best men whom these modern times have seen. Excommunicated, disinherited, and thrown upon the world when a mere boy to seek his livelihood, he resisted the inducements which on all sides were urged upon him to come forward in the world. He refused pensions, legacies, money in many forms; he maintained himself with grinding glasses for optical instruments, an art which he had been taught in early life, and in which he excelled the best workmen in Holland; and when he died, which was at the early age of forty-four, the affection with which he was regarded showed itself singularly in the endorsement of a tradesman's bill which was sent in to his executors, in which he was described as M. Spinoza of 'blessed memory.'

The account which remains of him we owe, not to

an admiring disciple, but to a clergyman to whom his theories were detestable; and his biographer allows that the most malignant scrutiny had failed to detect a blemish in his character—that, except so far as his opinions were blameable, he had lived to outward appearance free from fault. We desire, in what we are going to say of him, to avoid offensive collision with popular prejudices; still less shall we place ourselves in antagonism with the earnest convictions of serious persons: our business is to relate what Spinoza was, and leave others to form their own conclusions. But one lesson there does seem to lie in such a life of such a man,—a lesson which he taught equally by example and in word,—that wherever there is genuine and thorough love for good and goodness, no speculative superstructure of opinion can be so extravagant as to forfeit those graces which are promised, not to clearness of intellect, but to purity of heart. In Spinoza's own beautiful language,—'Justitia et caritas unicum et certissimum veræ fidei Catholicæ signum est, et veri Spiritûs Sancti fructus: et ubicumque hæc reperiuntur, ibi Christus re verâ est, et ubicumque hæc desunt deest Christus: solo namque Christi Spiritu duci possumus in amorem justitiæ et caritatis.' We may deny his conclusions; we may consider his system of thought preposterous and even pernicious; but we cannot refuse him the respect which is the right of all sincere and honourable men. Wherever and on whatever questions good men are found ranged on opposite sides, one of three alternatives is always true:—either the points of

disagreement are purely speculative and of no moral importance—or there is a misunderstanding of language, and the same thing is meant under a difference of words —or else the real truth is something different from what is held by any of the disputants, and each is representing some important element which the others ignore or forget. In either case, a certain calmness and good temper is necessary, if we would understand what we disagree with, or would oppose it with success; Spinoza's influence over European thought is too great to be denied or set aside; and if his doctrines be false in part, or false altogether, we cannot do their work more surely than by calumny or misrepresentation—a most obvious truism, which no one now living will deny in words, and which a century or two hence perhaps will begin to produce some effect upon the popular judgment.

Bearing it in mind, then, ourselves, as far as we are able, we propose to examine the Pantheistic philosophy in the first and only logical form which as yet it has assumed. Whatever may have been the case with Spinoza's disciples, in the author of this system there was no unwillingness to look closely at it, or to follow it out to its conclusions; and whatever other merits or demerits belong to him, at least he has done as much as with language can be done to make himself thoroughly understood.

And yet, both in friend and enemy alike, there has been a reluctance to see Spinoza as he really was. The Herder and Schleiermacher school have claimed him as a Christian—a position which no little disguise was necessary to make tenable: the orthodox Protestants

and Catholics have called him an Atheist—which is still more extravagant; and even a man like Novalis, who, it might have been expected, would have had something reasonable to say, could find no better name for him than a *Gott trunkner Mann*—a God intoxicated man: an expression which has been quoted by everybody who has since written upon the subject, and which is about as inapplicable as those laboriously pregnant sayings usually are. With due allowance for exaggeration, such a name would describe tolerably the Transcendental mystics, a Toler, a Boehmen, or a Swedenborg; but with what justice can it be applied to the cautious, methodical Spinoza, who carried his thoughts about with him for twenty years, deliberately shaping them, and who gave them at last to the world in a form more severe than with such subjects had ever been so much as attempted before? With him, as with all great men, there was no effort after sublime emotions. He was a plain, practical person; his object in philosophy was only to find a rule by which to govern his own actions and his own judgment; and his treatises contain no more than the conclusions at which he arrived in this purely personal search, with the grounds on which he rested them.

We cannot do better than follow his own account of himself as he has given it in the opening of his unfinished Tract, 'De Emendatione Intellectûs.' His language is very beautiful, but it is elaborate and full; and, as we have a long journey before us, we must be content to epitomize it.

Looking round him on his entrance into life, and

asking himself what was his place and business there, he turned for examples to his fellow-men, and found little that he could venture to imitate. He observed them all in their several ways governing themselves by their different notions of what they thought desirable; while these notions themselves were resting on no more secure foundation than a vague, inconsistent experience: the experience of one was not the experience of another, and thus men were all, so to say, rather playing experiments with life than living, and the larger portion of them miserably failing. Their mistakes arose, as it seemed to Spinoza, from inadequate knowledge; things which at one time looked desirable, disappointed expectation when obtained, and the wiser course concealed itself often under an uninviting exterior. He desired to substitute certainty for conjecture, and to endeavour to find, by some surer method, where the real good of man actually lay. We must remember that he had been brought up a Jew, and had been driven out of the Jews' communion; his mind was therefore in contact with the bare facts of life, with no creed or system lying between them and himself as the interpreter of experience. He was thrown on his own resources to find his way for himself, and the question was, how to find it. Of all forms of human thought, one only, he reflected, would admit of the certainty which he required. If certain knowledge were attainable at all, it must be looked for under the mathematical or demonstrative method; by tracing from ideas clearly conceived the consequences which were formally involved in them.

What, then, were these ideas—these *veræ ideæ*, as he calls them—and how were they to be obtained? If they were to serve as the axioms of his system, they must be self-evident truths, of which no proof was required; and the illustration which he gives of the character of such ideas is ingenious and Platonic.

In order to produce any mechanical instrument, Spinoza says, we require others with which to manufacture it; and others again to manufacture those; and it would seem thus as if the process must be an infinite one, and as if nothing could ever be made at all. Nature, however, has provided for the difficulty in creating of her own accord certain rude instruments with the help of which we can make others better; and others again with the help of those. And so he thinks it must be with the mind; there must be somewhere similar original instruments provided also as the first outfit of intellectual enterprise. To discover these, he examines the various senses in which men are said to know anything, and he finds that they resolve themselves into three, or, as he elsewhere divides it, four.

We know a thing—

1. i. *Ex mero auditu:* because we have heard it from some person or persons whose veracity we have no reason to question.

   ii. *Ab experientiâ vagâ:* from general experience: for instance, all facts or phenomena which come to us through our senses as phenomena, but of the causes of which we are ignorant.

2. We know a thing as we have correctly conceived the laws of its phenomena, and see them following in their sequence in the order of nature.

3. Finally, we know a thing, *ex scientiâ intuitivâ*, which alone is absolutely clear and certain.

To illustrate these divisions, suppose it be required to find a fourth proportional which shall stand to the third of three numbers as the second does to the first. The merchant's clerk knows his rule; he multiplies the second into the third and divides by the first. He neither knows nor cares to know why the result is the number which he seeks, but he has learnt the fact that it is so, and he remembers it.

A person a little wiser has tried the experiment in a variety of simple cases; he has discovered the rule by induction, but still does not understand it.

A third has mastered the laws of proportion mathematically, as he has found them in Euclid or other geometrical treatise.

A fourth, with the plain numbers of 1, 2, and 3, sees for himself by simple intuitive force that $1 : 2 = 3 : 6$.

Of these several kinds of knowledge, the third and fourth alone deserve to be called knowledge, the others being no more than opinions more or less justly founded. The last is the only real insight, although the third, being exact in its form, may be depended upon as a basis of certainty. Under this last, as Spinoza allows, nothing except the very simplest truths, *non nisi simplicissimæ veritates*, can be perceived; but, such as they

are, they are the foundation of all after-science; and the true ideas, the *veræ ideæ*, which are apprehended by this faculty of intuition, are the primitive instruments with which nature has furnished us. If we ask for a test by which to distinguish them, he has none to give us. 'Veritas,' he says to his friends, in answer to their question, 'veritas index sui est et falsi. Veritas se ipsam patefacit.' All original truths are of such a kind that they cannot without absurdity even be conceived to be false; the opposites of them are contradictions in terms.—'Ut sciam me scire, necessario debeo prius scire. Hinc patet quod certitudo nihil est præter ipsam essentiam objectivam. . . . Cum itaque veritas nullo egeat signo, sed sufficiat habere essentiam rerum objectivam, aut, quod idem est, ideas, ut omne tollatur dubium; hinc sequitur quod vera non est methodus, signum veritatis quærere post acquisitionem idearum; sed quod vera methodus est via, ut ipsa veritas, aut essentiæ objectivæ rerum, aut ideæ (omnia illa idem significant) debito ordine quærantur.' (*De Emend. Intell.*)

Spinoza will scarcely carry with him the reasoner of the nineteenth century in arguments like these. When we remember the thousand conflicting opinions, the truth of which their several advocates have as little doubted as they have doubted their own existence, we require some better evidence than a mere feeling of certainty; and Aristotle's less pretending canon promises a safer road. Ὃ πᾶσι δοκεῖ, 'what all men think,' says Aristotle, τοῦτο εἶναι φάμεν, 'this we say *is*,' —'and if you will not have this to be a fair ground of

conviction, you will scarcely find one which will serve you better.' We are to see, however, what these *ideæ* are which are offered to us as self-evident. Of course, if they are self-evident, if they do produce conviction, nothing more is to be said; but it does, indeed, appear strange to us that Spinoza was not staggered as to the validity of his canon, when his friends, every one of them, so floundered and stumbled among what he regarded as his simplest propositions; when he found them, in spite of all that he could say, requiring endless *signa veritatis*, and unable for a long time even to understand their meaning, far less to 'recognize them as elementary certainties.' Modern readers may, perhaps, be more fortunate. We produce at length the definitions and axioms of the first book of the 'Ethica,' and they may judge for themselves:—

DEFINITIONS.

1. By a thing which is *causa sui*, its own cause, I mean a thing the essence of which involves the existence of it, or a thing which cannot be conceived except as existing.

2. I call a thing finite, *suo genere*, when it can be limited by another (or others) of the same nature—*e. g.* a given body is called finite, because we can always conceive another body enveloping it; but body is not limited by thought, nor thought by body.

3. By substance I mean what exists in itself and is conceived by itself; the conception of which, that is, does not involve the conception of anything else as the cause of it.

4. By attribute I mean whatever the intellect perceives of substance as constituting the essence of substance.

5. Mode is an affection of substance, or is that which is in something else, by and through which it is conceived.

6. God is a being absolutely infinite; a substance consisting of infinite attributes, each of which expresses His eternal and infinite essence.

EXPLANATION.

I say *absolutely* infinite, not infinite *suo genere*—for of what is infinite *suo genere* only, the attributes are not infinite but finite; whereas what is infinite absolutely contains in its own essence everything by which substance can be expressed, and which involves no impossibility.

7. That thing is 'free' which exists by the sole necessity of its own nature, and is determined in its operation by itself only. That is 'not free' which is called into existence by something else, and is determined in its operation according to a fixed and definite method.

8. Eternity is existence itself, conceived as following necessarily and solely from the definition of the thing which is eternal.

EXPLANATION.

Because existence of this kind is conceived as an eternal verity, and, therefore, cannot be explained by duration, even though the duration be without beginning or end.

So far the definitions; then follow the

AXIOMS.

1. All things that exist, exist either of themselves or in virtue of something else.

2. What we cannot conceive of as existing in virtue of something else, we must conceive through and in itself.

3. From a given cause an effect necessarily follows, and if there be no given cause no effect can follow.

4. Things which have nothing in common with each other cannot be understood through one another—*i. e.* the conception of one does not involve the conception of the other.

5. To understand an effect implies that we understand the cause of it.

6. A true idea is one which corresponds with its *ideate*.

7. The essence of anything which can be conceived as non-existent does not involve existence.

Such is our metaphysical outfit of simple ideas with

which to start upon our enterprise of learning. The larger number of them, so far from being simple, must be absolutely without meaning to persons whose minds are undisciplined in metaphysical abstraction; they become only intelligible propositions as we look back upon them with the light of the system which they are supposed to contain.

Although, however, we may justly quarrel with such unlooked-for difficulties, the important question, after all, is not of the obscurity of these axioms, but of their truth. Many things in all the sciences are obscure to an unpractised understanding, which are true enough and clear enough to people acquainted with the subjects, and they may be fairly made the foundations of a scientific system, although rudimentary students must be contented to accept them upon faith. Of course, also, it is entirely competent to Spinoza, or to any one, to define the terms which he intends to use just as he pleases, provided it be understood that any conclusions which he derives out of them apply only to the ideas so defined, and not to any supposed object existing which corresponds with them. Euclid defines his triangles and circles, and discovers that to figures so described, certain properties previously unknown may be proved to belong. But as in nature there are no such things as triangles and circles exactly answering the definition, his conclusions, as applied to actually existing objects, are either not true at all or only proximately so. Whether it be possible to bridge over the gulf between existing things and the abstract conception of them, as

Spinoza attempts to do, we shall presently see. It is a royal road to certainty if it be a practicable one; but we cannot say that we ever met any one who could say honestly Spinoza's reasonings had convinced him; and power of demonstration, like all other powers, can be judged only by its effects. Does it prove? does it produce conviction? If not, it is nothing.

We need not detain our readers among these abstractions. The power of Spinozism does not lie so remote from ordinary appreciation, or we should long ago have heard the last of it. Like all other systems which have attracted followers, it addresses itself, not to the logical intellect, but to the imagination, which it affects to set aside. We refuse to submit to the demonstrations by which it thrusts itself upon our reception; but regarding it as a whole, as an attempt to explain the nature of the world of which we are a part, we can still ask ourselves how far the attempt is successful. Some account of these things we know that there must be, and the curiosity which asks the question regards itself, of course, as competent in some degree to judge of the answer to it.

Before proceeding, however, to regard this philosophy in the aspect in which it is really powerful, we must clear our way through the fallacy of the method.

The system is evolved in a series of theorems in severely demonstrative order out of the definitions and axioms which we have translated. To propositions 1—6 we have nothing to object; they will not, probably, convey any very clear ideas, but they are so far purely

abstract, and seem to follow (as far as we can speak of 'following' in such subjects) by fair reasoning. 'Substance is prior in nature to its affections.' 'Substances with different attributes have nothing in common,' and, therefore, 'one cannot be the cause of the other.' 'Things really distinct are distinguished by difference either of attribute or mode (there being nothing else by which they can be distinguished), and, therefore, because things modally distinguished do not *quâ* substance differ from one another, there cannot be more than one substance of the same attribute. Therefore (let us remind our readers that we are among what Spinoza calls *notiones simplicissimas*), since there cannot be two substances of the same attribute, and substances of different attributes cannot be the cause one of the other, it follows that no substance can be produced by another substance.'

The existence of substance, he then concludes, is involved in the nature of the thing itself. Substance exists. It does and must. We ask, why? and we are answered, because there is nothing capable of producing it, and therefore it is self-caused—*i. e.* by the first definition the essence of it implies existence as part of the idea. It is astonishing that Spinoza should not have seen that he assumes the fact that substance does exist in order to prove that it must. If it cannot be produced *and* exists, then, of course, it exists in virtue of its own nature. But supposing it does not exist, supposing it is all a delusion, the proof falls to pieces. We have to fall back on the facts of experience, on the obscure and

unscientific certainty that the thing which we call the world, and the personalities which we call ourselves, are a real substantial something, before we find ground of any kind to stand upon. Conscious of the infirmity of his demonstration, Spinoza winds round it and round it, adding proof to proof, but never escaping the same vicious circle: substance exists because it exists, and the ultimate experience of existence, so far from being of that clear kind which can be accepted as an axiom, is the most confused of all our sensations. What is existence? and what is that something which we say exists? Things—essences—existences! these are but the vague names with which faculties, constructed only to deal with conditional phenomena, disguise their incapacity. The world in the Hindoo legend was supported upon the back of the tortoise. It was a step between the world and nothingness, and served to cheat the imagination with ideas of a fictitious resting-place.

If any one affirms (says Spinoza) that he has a clear, distinct—that is to say, a true—idea of substance, but that nevertheless he is uncertain whether any such substance exist, it is the same as if he were to affirm that he had a true idea, but yet was uncertain whether it was not false. Or if he says that substance can be created, it is like saying that a false idea can become a true idea—as absurd a thing as it is possible to conceive; and therefore the existence of substance, as well as the essence of it, must be acknowledged as an eternal verity.

It is again the same story. Spinoza speaks of a clear idea of substance; but he has not proved that such an idea is within the compass of the mind. A man's own notion that he sees clearly, is no proof

that he really sees clearly; and the distinctness of a definition in itself is no evidence that it corresponds adequately with the object of it. No doubt a man who professes to have an idea of substance as an existing thing, cannot doubt, as long as he has it, that substance so exists. This is merely to say that as long as a man is certain of this or that fact, he has no doubt of it. But neither his certainty nor Spinoza's will be of any use to a man who has no such idea, and who cannot recognize the lawfulness of the method by which it is arrived at.

From the self-existing substance it is a short step to the existence of God. After a few more propositions, following one another with the same kind of coherence, we arrive successively at the conclusion that there is but one substance; that this substance being necessarily existent, it is also infinite; that it is therefore identical with the Being who had been previously defined as the 'Ens absolute perfectum.'

Demonstrations of this kind were the characteristics of the period. Des Cartes had set the example of constructing them, and was followed by Cudworth, Clarke, Berkeley, and many others besides Spinoza. The inconclusiveness of the method may perhaps be observed most readily in the strangely opposite conceptions formed by all these writers of the nature of that Being whose existence they nevertheless agreed, by the same process, to gather each out of their ideas. It is important, however, to examine it carefully, for it is the very keystone of the Pantheistic system.

As stated by Des Cartes, the argument stands something as follows:—God is an all-perfect Being,—perfection is the idea which we form of Him: existence is a mode of perfection, and therefore God exists. The sophism we are told is only apparent. Existence is part of the idea—as much involved in it as the equality of all lines drawn from the centre to the circumference of a circle is involved in the idea of a circle. A non-existent all-perfect Being is as inconceivable as a quadrilateral triangle.

It is sometimes answered that in this way we may prove the existence of anything—Titans, Chimæras, or Olympian Gods; we have but to define them as existing, and the proof is complete. But, this objection summarily set aside; none of these beings are by hypothesis absolutely perfect, and, therefore, of their existence we can conclude nothing. With greater justice, however, we may say, that of such terms as perfection and existence we know too little to speculate. Existence may be an imperfection for all we can tell; we know nothing about the matter. Such arguments are but endless *petitiones principii*—like the self-devouring serpent, resolving themselves into nothing. We wander round and round them, in the hope of finding some tangible point at which we can seize their meaning; but we are presented everywhere with the same impracticable surface, from which our grasp glides off ineffectual.

Spinoza himself, however, obviously felt an intense conviction of the validity of his argument. His opinion is stated with sufficient distinctness in one of his letters.

'Nothing is more clear,' he writes to his pupil De Vries, 'than that, on the one hand, everything which exists is conceived by or under some attribute or other; that the more reality, therefore, a being or thing has, the more attributes must be assigned to it;' 'and conversely' (and this he calls his *argumentum palmarium* in proof of the existence of God), '*the more attributes I assign to a thing, the more I am forced to conceive it as existing.*' Arrange the argument how we please, we shall never get it into a form clearer than this:—The more perfect a thing is, the more it must exist (as if existence could admit of more or less); and therefore the all-perfect Being must exist absolutely. There is no flaw, we are told, in the reasoning; and if we are not convinced, it is from the confused habits of our own minds.

Some persons may think that all arguments are good when on the right side, and that it is a gratuitous impertinence to quarrel with the proofs of a conclusion which it is so desirable that all should receive. As yet, however, we are but inadequately acquainted with the idea attached by Spinoza to the word perfection; and if we commit ourselves to his logic, it may lead us out to unexpected consequences. All such reasonings presume, as a first condition, that we men possess faculties capable of dealing with absolute ideas; that we can understand the nature of things external to ourselves as they really *are* in their absolute relation to one another, independent of our own conception. The question immediately before us is one which can never

be determined. The truth which is to be proved is one which we already believe; and if, as we believe also, our conviction of God's existence is, like that of our own existence, intuitive and immediate, the grounds of it can never adequately be analyzed; we cannot say exactly what they are, and therefore we cannot say what they are not. Whatever we receive intuitively, we receive without proof; and stated as a naked proposition, it must involve a *petitio principii*. We have a right, however, to object at once to an argument in which the conclusion is more obvious than the premises; and if it lead on to other consequences which we disapprove in themselves, we reject it without difficulty or hesitation. We ourselves believe that God is, because we experience the control of a 'power' which is stronger than we; and our instincts teach us so much of the nature of that power as our own relation to it requires us to know God is the being to whom our obedience is due; and the perfections which we attribute to Him are those moral perfections which are the proper object of our reverence. Strange to say, the perfections of Spinoza, which appear so clear to him, are without any moral character whatever; and for men to speak of the justice of God, he tells us, is but to see in Him a reflection of themselves; as if a triangle were to conceive of Him as *eminenter triangularis*, or a circle to give Him the property of circularity.

Having arrived at existence, we next find ourselves among ideas, which at least are intelligible, if the character of them is as far removed as before from the

circle of ordinary thought. Nothing exists except substance, the attributes under which substance is expressed, and the modes or affections of those attributes. There is but one substance self-existent, eternal, necessary, and that is the absolutely Infinite all-perfect Being. Substance cannot produce substance, and therefore there is no such thing as creation; and everything which exists is either an attribute of God, or an affection of some attribute of Him, modified in this manner or in that. Beyond Him there is nothing, and nothing like Him or equal to Him; He therefore alone in Himself is absolutely free, uninfluenced by anything, for nothing is except Himself; and from Him and from His supreme power, essence, intelligence (for these words mean the same thing), all things have necessarily flowed, and will and must flow for ever, in the same manner as from the nature of a triangle it follows, and has followed, and will follow from eternity to eternity, that the angles of it are equal to two right angles. It would seem as if the analogy were but an artificial play upon words, and that it was only metaphorically that in mathematical demonstration we speak of one thing as following from another. The properties of a curve or a triangle are what they are at all times, and the sequence is merely in the order in which they are successively known to ourselves. But according to Spinoza, this is the only true sequence; and what we call the universe, and all the series of incidents in earth or planet, are involved formally and mathematically in the definition of God.

Each attribute is infinite *suo genere;* and it is time that we should know distinctly the meaning which Spinoza attaches to that important word. Out of the infinite number of the attributes of God, two only, he says, are known to us—'extension,' and 'thought,' or 'mind.' Duration, even though it be without beginning or end, is not an attribute; it is not even a real thing. Time has no relation to Being, conceived mathematically; it would be absurd to speak of circles or triangles as any older to-day than they were at the beginning of the world. These and everything of the same kind are conceived, as Spinoza rightly says, *sub quâdam specie æternitatis.* But extension, or substance extended, and thought, or substance perceiving, are real, absolute, and objective. We must not confound extension with body; for though body be a mode of extension, there is extension which is not body, and it is infinite because we cannot conceive it to be limited except by itself—or, in other words, to be limited at all. And as it is with extension, so it is with mind, which is also infinite with the infinity of its object. Thus there is no such thing as creation, and no beginning or end. All things of which our faculties are cognizant under one or other of these attributes are produced from God, and in Him they have their being, and without Him they would cease to be.

Proceeding by steps of rigid demonstration (and most admirably indeed is the form of the philosophy adapted to the spirit of it), we learn that God is the only *causa libera;* that no other thing or being has any

power of self-determination; all moves by fixed laws of causation, motive upon motive, act upon act; there is no free will, and no contingency; and however necessary it may be for our incapacity to consider future things as in a sense contingent (see *Tractat. Theol. Polit.* cap. iv. sec. 4), this is but one of the thousand convenient deceptions which we are obliged to employ with ourselves. God is the *causa immanens omnium;* He is not a personal being existing apart from the universe; but Himself in His own reality, He is expressed in the universe, which is His living garment. Keeping to the philosophical language of the time, Spinoza preserves the distinction between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata.* The first is being in itself the attributes of substance as they are conceived simply and alone; the second is the infinite series of modifications which follow out of the properties of these attributes. And thus all which *is,* is what it is by an absolute necessity, and could not have been other than it is. God is free, because no causes external to Himself have power over Him; and as good men are most free when most a law to themselves, so it is no infringement on God's freedom to say that He *must* have acted as He has acted, but rather He is absolutely free because absolutely a law Himself to Himself.

Here ends the first book of Spinoza's Ethics—the book which contains, as we said, the *notiones simplicissimas,* and the primary and rudimental deductions from them. *His Dei naturam,* he says, in his lofty confidence, *ejusque proprietates explicui.* But, as if conscious

that his method will never convince, he concludes this portion of his subject with an analytical appendix; not to explain or apologize, but to show us clearly, in practical detail, the position into which he has led us. The root, we are told, of all philosophical errors lies in our notion of final causes; we invert the order of nature, and interpret God's action through our own; we speak of His intentions, as if He were a man; we assume that we are capable of measuring them, and finally erect ourselves, and our own interests, into the centre and criterion of all things. Hence arises our notion of evil. If the universe be what this philosophy has described it, the perfection which it assigns to God is extended to everything, and evil is of course impossible; there is no shortcoming either in nature or in man; each person and each thing is exactly what it has the power to be, and nothing more. But men imagining that all things exist on their account, and perceiving their own interests, bodily and spiritual, capable of being variously affected, have conceived these opposite influences to result from opposite and contradictory powers, and call what contributes to their advantage good, and whatever obstructs it, evil. For our convenience we form generic conceptions of human excellence, as archetypes after which to strive; and such of us as approach nearest to such archetypes are supposed to be virtuous, and those who are most remote from them to be wicked. But such generic abstractions are but *entia imaginationis*, and have no real existence. In the eyes of God each thing is what it has the means

of being. There is no rebellion against Him, and no resistance of His will; in truth, therefore, there neither is nor can be such a thing as a bad action in the common sense of the word. Actions are good or bad, not in themselves, but as compared with the nature of the agent; what we censure in men, we tolerate and even admire in animals; and as soon as we are aware of our mistake in assigning to man a power of free volition, our notion of evil as a positive thing will cease to exist.

If I am asked (concludes Spinoza) why then all mankind were not created by God, so as to be governed solely by reason? it was because, I reply, there was to God no lack of matter to create all things from the highest to the lowest grade of perfection; or, to speak more properly, because the laws of God's nature were ample enough to suffice for the production of all things which can be conceived by an Infinite Intelligence.

It is possible that readers who have followed us so far will now turn away from a philosophy which issues in such conclusions; resentful, perhaps, that it should have been ever laid before them at all, in language so little expressive of aversion and displeasure. We must claim, however, in Spinoza's name, the right which he claims for himself. His system must be judged as a whole; and whatever we may think ourselves would be the moral effect of such doctrines if they were generally received, in his hands and in his heart they are worked into maxims of the purest and loftiest morality. And at least we are bound to remember that some account of this great mystery of evil there must be; and although familiarity with commonly-received explanations may disguise from us the difficulties with which

they too, as well as that of Spinoza, are embarrassed, such difficulties none the less exist. The fact is the grand perplexity, and for ourselves we acknowledge that of all theories about it Spinoza's would appear to us the least irrational, setting conscience, and the voice of conscience, aside. The objections, with the replies to them, are well drawn out in the correspondence with William de Blyenburg. It will be seen at once with how little justice the denial of evil as a positive thing can be called equivalent to denying it relatively to man, or to confusing the moral distinctions between virtue and vice.

We speak (writes Spinoza, in answer to Blyenburg, who had urged something of the kind), we speak of this or that man having done a wrong thing, when we compare him with a general standard of humanity; but inasmuch as God neither perceives things in such abstract manner, nor forms to Himself such generic definitions, and since there is no more reality in anything than God has assigned to it, it follows, surely, that the absence of good exists only in respect of man's understanding, not in respect of God's.

If this be so, then (replies Blyenburg), bad men fulfil God's will as well as good.

It is true (Spinoza answers) they fulfil it, yet not as the good nor as well as the good, nor are they to be compared with them. The better a thing or a person be, the more there is in him of God's spirit, and the more he expresses God's will; while the bad, being without that divine love which arises from the knowledge of God, and through which alone we are called (in respect of our understandings) his servants, are but as instruments in the hand of the artificer—they serve unconsciously, and are consumed in their service.

Spinoza, after all, is but stating in philosophical language the extreme doctrine of Grace; and St Paul, if we interpret his real belief by the one passage so

often quoted, in which he compares us to 'clay in the hands of the potter, who maketh one vessel to honour and another to dishonour,' may be accused with justice of having held the same opinion. If Calvinism be pressed to its logical consequences, it either becomes an intolerable falsehood, or it resolves itself into the philosophy of Spinoza. It is monstrous to call evil a positive thing, and to assert, in the same breath, that God has predetermined it,—to tell us that He has ordained what He hates, and hates what He has ordained. It is incredible that we should be without power to obey Him except through His free grace, and yet be held responsible for our failures when that grace has been withheld. And it is idle to call a philosopher sacrilegious who has but systematized the faith which so many believe, and cleared it of its most hideous features.

Spinoza flinches from nothing, and disguises no conclusions either from himself or from his readers. We believe for ourselves that logic has no business with such questions; that the answer to them lies in the conscience and not in the intellect. Spinoza thinks otherwise; and he is at least true to the guide which he has chosen. Blyenburg presses him with instances of monstrous crime, such as bring home to the heart the natural horror of it. He speaks of Nero's murder of Agrippina, and asks if God can be called the cause of such an act as that.

God (replies Spinoza, calmly) is the cause of all things which have reality. If you can show that evil, errors, crimes express any real things, I agree readily that God is the cause of them; but I con-

ceive myself to have proved that what constitutes the essence of evil is not a real thing at all, and therefore that God cannot be the cause of it. Nero's matricide was not a crime, in so far as it was a positive outward act. Orestes also killed his mother; and we do not judge Orestes as we judge Nero. The crime of the latter lay in his being without pity, without obedience, without natural affection —none of which things express any positive essence, but the absence of it; and therefore God was not the cause of these, although He was the cause of the act and the intention.

But once for all (he adds), this aspect of things will remain intolerable and unintelligible as long as the common notions of free will remain unremoved.

And of course, and we shall all confess it, if these notions are as false as Spinoza supposes them—if we have no power to be anything but what we are, there neither is nor can be such a thing as moral evil; and what we call crimes will no more involve a violation of the will of God, they will no more impair His moral attributes if we suppose Him to have willed them, than the same actions, whether of lust, ferocity, or cruelty, in the inferior animals. There will be but, as Spinoza says, an infinite gradation in created things, the poorest life being more than none, the meanest active disposition something better than inertia, and the smallest exercise of reason better than mere ferocity. 'The Lord has made all things for Himself, even the wicked for the day of evil.'

The moral aspect of the matter will be more clear as we proceed. We pause, however, to notice one difficulty of a metaphysical kind, which is best disposed of in passing. Whatever obscurity may lie about the thing which we call Time (philosophers not being

able to agree what it is, or whether properly it *is* anything), the words past, present, future, do undoubtedly convey some definite idea with them: things will be which are not yet, and have been which are no longer. Now, if everything which exists be a necessary mathematical consequence from the nature or definition of the One Being, we cannot see how there can be any time but the present, or how past and future have room for a meaning. God is, and therefore all properties of Him *are*, just as every property of a circle exists in it as soon as the circle exists. We may if we like, for convenience, throw our theorems into the future, and say, *e.g.* that if two lines in a circle cut each other, the rectangle under the parts of the one *will* equal that under the parts of the other. But we only mean in reality that these rectangles *are* equal; and the *future* relates only to our knowledge of the fact. Allowing, however, as much as we please, that the condition of England a hundred years hence lies already in embryo in existing causes, it is a paradox to say that such condition exists already in the sense in which the properties of the circle exist; and yet Spinoza insists on the illustration.

It is singular that he should not have noticed the difficulty; not that either it or the answer to it (which no doubt would have been ready enough) are likely to interest any person except metaphysicians, a class of thinkers, happily, which is rapidly diminishing.

We proceed to more important matters—to Spinoza's detailed theory of nature as exhibited in man and in

man's mind. His theory for its bold ingenuity is by far the most remarkable which on this dark subject has ever been proposed. Whether we can believe it or not, is another question; yet undoubtedly it provides a solution for every difficulty; it accepts with equal welcome the extremes of materialism and of spiritualism: and if it be the test of the soundness of a philosophy that it will explain phenomena and reconcile contradictions, it is hard to account for the fact that a system which bears such a test so admirably, should nevertheless be so incredible as it is.

Most people have heard of the 'Harmonie Préétablie' of Leibnitz; it is borrowed without acknowledgment from Spinoza, and adapted to the Leibnitzian philosophy. 'Man,' says Leibnitz, 'is composed of mind and body; but what is mind and what is body, and what is the nature of their union? Substances so opposite in kind cannot affect one another; mind cannot act on matter, or matter upon mind; and the appearance of their reciprocal operation is an appearance only and a delusion.' A delusion so general, however, required to be accounted for; and Leibnitz accounted for it by supposing that God, in creating a world composed of material and spiritual phenomena, ordained that these several phenomena should proceed from the beginning in parallel lines side by side in a constantly corresponding harmony. The sense of seeing results, it appears to us, from the formation of a picture upon the retina. The motion of the arm or the leg appears to result from an act of will; but in either case we

mistake coincidence for causation. Between substances so wholly alien there can be no intercommunion; and we only suppose that the object seen produces the idea, and that the desire produces the movement, because the phenomena of matter and the phenomena of spirit are so contrived as to flow always in the same order and sequence. This hypothesis, as coming from Leibnitz, has been, if not accepted, at least listened to respectfully; because while taking it out of its proper place, he contrived to graft it upon Christianity; and succeeded, with a sort of speculative legerdemain, in making it appear to be in harmony with revealed religion. Disguised as a philosophy of Predestination, and connected with the Christian doctrine of Retribution, it steps forward with an air of unconscious innocence, as if interfering with nothing which Christians generally believe. And yet, leaving as it does no larger scope for liberty or responsibility than when in the hands of Spinoza,[1] Leibnitz, in our opinion, has

[1] Since these words were written a book has appeared in Paris by an able disciple of Leibnitz, which, although it does not lead us to modify the opinion expressed in them, yet obliges us to give our reasons for speaking as we do. M. de Careil[1] has discovered in the library at Hanover, a MS. in the handwriting of Leibnitz, containing a series of remarks on the book of a certain John Wachter. It does not appear who this John Wachter was, nor by what accident he came to have so distinguished a critic. If we may judge by the extracts at present before us, he seems to have been an absurd and extravagant person, who had attempted to combine the theology of the Cabbala with the very little which he was able to understand of the philosophy of Spinoza;

[1] *Réfutation Inédite de Spinoza.* Par Leibnitz. *Précédée d'une Memoire,* par Foucher de Careil. Paris. 1854.

only succeeded in making it infinitely more revolting. Spinoza could not regard the bad man as an object of

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and, as far as he is concerned, neither his writings nor the reflections upon them are of interest to any human being. The extravagance of Spinoza's followers, however, furnished Leibnitz with an opportunity of noticing the points on which he most disapproved of Spinoza himself; and these few notices M. de Careil has now for the first time published as *The Refutation of Spinoza*, by Leibnitz. They are exceedingly brief and scanty; and the writer of them would assuredly have hesitated to describe an imperfect criticism by so ambitious a title. The modern editor, however, must be allowed the privilege of a worshipper, and we will not quarrel with him for an exaggerated estimate of what his master had accomplished. We are indebted to his enthusiasm for what is at least a curious discovery, and we will not qualify the gratitude which he has earned by industry and good will. At the same time, the notes themselves confirm the opinion which we have always entertained, that Leibnitz did not understand Spinoza. Leibnitz did not understand him, and the followers of Leibnitz do not understand him now. If he were no more than what he is described in the book before us—if his metaphysics were 'miserable,' if his philosophy was absurd, and he himself nothing more than a second-rate disciple of Descartes—we can assure M. de Careil that we should long ago have heard the last of him.

There must be something else, something very different from this, to explain the position which he holds in Germany, or the fascination which his writings exerted over such minds as those of Lessing or of Göthe; the fact of so enduring an influence is more than a sufficient answer to mere depreciating criticism. This, however, is not a point which there is any use in pressing. Our present business is to justify the two assertions which we have made. First, that Leibnitz borrowed his *Theory of the Harmonie Préétablie* from Spinoza, without acknowledgment; and, secondly, that this theory is quite as inconsistent with religion as is that of Spinoza, and only differs from it in disguising its real character.

First for the *Harmonie Préétablie*. Spinoza's *Ethics* appeared in 1677; and we know that they were read by Leibnitz. In 1696, Leibnitz announced as a discovery of his own, a Theory of *The Communication of Substances*, which he illustrates in the following manner:—

'Vous ne comprenez pas, dites-vous, comment je pourrois prouver ce que j'ai avancé touchant la communication, ou l'harmonie de deux substances aussi différentes que l'âme et le corps? Il est vrai que je crois en avoir trouvé le moyen; et voici

Divine anger and a subject of retributory punishment. He was not a Christian, and made no pretension to be

comment je prétends vous satisfaire. Figurez-vous deux horloges ou montres qui s'accordent parfaitement. Or cela se peut faire de trois manières. La 1e consiste dans une influence mutuelle. La 2e est d'y attacher un ouvrier habile qui les redresse, et les mette d'accord à tous moments. La 3e est de fabriquer ces deux pendules avec tant d'art et de justesse, qu'on se puisse assurer de leur accord dans la suite. Mettez maintenant l'âme et le corps à la place de ces deux pendules; leur accord peut arriver par l'une de ces trois manières. La voye d'influence est celle de la philosophie vulgaire; mais comme l'on ne sauroit concevoir des particules matérielles qui puissent passer d'une de ces substances dans l'autre, il faut abandonner ce sentiment. La voye de l'assistance continuelle du Créateur est celle du système des causes occasionnelles; mais je tiens que c'est faire intervenir Deus ex machinâ dans une chose naturelle et ordinaire, où selon la raison il ne doit concourir, que de la manière qu'il concourt à toutes les autres choses naturelles. Ainsi il ne reste que mon hypothèse; c'est-à-dire que la voye de l'harmonie. Dieu a fait dès le commencement chacune de ces deux substances de telle nature, qu'en ne suivant que ces propres loix qu'elle a reçues avec son être, elle s'accorde pourtant avec l'autre tout comme s'il y avoit une influence mutuelle, ou comme si Dieu y mettoit toujours la main au-delà de son concours général. Après cela je n'ai pas besoin de rien prouver à moins qu'on ne veuille exiger que je prouve que Dieu est assez habile pour se servir de cette artifice,' &c. —LEIBNITZ, *Opera*, p. 133. Berlin edition, 1840.

Leibnitz, as we have said, attempts to reconcile his system with Christianity, and therefore, of course, this theory of the relation of mind and body wears a very different aspect under his treatment, from what it wears under that of Spinoza. But Spinoza and Leibnitz both agree in this one peculiar conception in which they differ from all other philosophers before or after them—that mind and body have no direct communication with each other, and that the phenomena of them merely correspond. M. de Carcil says they both borrowed it from Descartes; but that is impossible. Descartes held no such opinion; it was the precise point of disagreement at which Spinoza parted from him; and therefore, since in point of date Spinoza had the advantage of Leibnitz, and we know that Leibnitz was acquainted with his writings, we must either suppose that he was directly indebted to Spinoza for an obligation which he ought to have acknowledged, or else, which is extremely improbable, that having read

considered such; and it did not occur to him to regard the actions of a being which, both with Leibnitz and

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Spinoza and forgotten him, he afterwards re-originated for himself one of the most singular and peculiar notions which was ever offered to the belief of mankind.

So much for the first point, which, after all, is but of little moment. It is more important to ascertain whether, in the hands of Leibnitz, this theory can be any better reconciled with what is commonly meant by religion; whether, that is, the ideas of obedience and disobedience, merit and demerit, judgment and retribution, have any proper place under it. Spinoza makes no pretension to anything of the kind, and openly declares that these ideas are ideas merely, and human mistakes. Leibnitz, in opposition to him, endeavours to re-establish them in the following manner. He conceives that the system of the universe has been arranged and predetermined from the moment at which it was launched into being; from the moment at which God selected it, with all its details, as the best which could exist; but that it is carried on by the action of individual creatures (monads as he calls them) which, though necessarily obeying the laws of their existence, yet obey them with a character of spontaneity,' which although 'automata,' are yet voluntary agents; and therefore, by the consent of their hearts to their actions, entitle themselves to moral praise or moral censure. The question is, whether by the mere assertion of the co-existence of these opposite qualities in the monad man, he has proved that such qualities can co-exist. In our opinion, it is like speaking of a circular eclipse, or of a quadrilateral triangle. There is a plain dilemma in these matters from which no philosophy can extricate itself. If men can incur guilt, their actions might be other than they are. If they cannot act otherwise than they do, they cannot incur guilt. So at least it appears to us; yet, in the darkness of our knowledge, we would not complain merely of a theory, and if our earthly life were all in all, and the grave remained the extreme horizon of our hopes and fears, the *Harmonie Prédétablie* might be tolerated as credible, and admired as ingenious and beautiful. It is when forcibly attached to a creed of the future, with which it has no natural connection, that it assumes its repulsive features. The world may be in the main good; while the good, from the unknown condition of its existence, may be impossible without some intermixture of evil; and although Leibnitz was at times staggered even himself by the misery and wickedness which he witnessed, and was driven to comfort himself with the reflection that this earth might be but one world in the midst of the universe, and perhaps the single chequered exception in an infinity of stainless globes, yet

himself, is (to use his own expression) an *automaton spirituale*, as deserving a fiery indignation and everlasting vengeance.

'Deus,' according to Spinoza's definition, 'est ens constans infinitis attributis quorum unumquodque æternam et infinitam essentiam exprimit.' Under each of these attributes *infinita sequuntur*, and every-thing which an infinite intelligence can conceive, and an infinite power can produce,—everything which follows as a possibility out of the Divine nature,—all things which have been, and are, and will be,—find expression and actual existence, not under one attribute only, but under each and every attribute. Language is so ill adapted to explain such a system, that even to state it accurately is all but impossible, and analogies can only remotely suggest what such expressions mean.

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we would not quarrel with a hypothesis because it was imperfect; it might pass as a possible conjecture on a dark subject, when nothing better than conjecture was attainable.

But as soon as we are told that the evil in these human 'automata' being a necessary condition of this world which God has called into being, is yet infinitely detestable to God; that the creatures who suffer under the accursed necessity of committing sin are infinitely guilty in God's eyes, for doing what they have no power to avoid, and may therefore be justly punished in everlasting fire; we recoil against the paradox.

No disciple of Leibnitz will maintain, that unless he had found this belief in an eternity of penal retribution an article of the popular creed, such a doctrine would have formed a natural appendage of his system; and if M. de Careil desires to know why the influence of Spinoza, whose genius he considers so insignificant, has been so deep and so enduring, while Leibnitz has only secured for himself a mere admiration of his talents, it is because Spinoza was not afraid to be consistent, even at the price of the world's reprobation, and refused to purchase the applause of his own age at the sacrifice of sincerity.

But it is as if it were said that the same thought might be expressed in an infinite variety of languages; and not in words only, but in action, in painting, in sculpture, in music, in any form of any kind which can be employed as a means of spiritual embodiment. Of all these infinite attributes, two only, as we said, are known to us—extension and thought. Material phenomena are phenomena of extension; and to every modification of extension an idea corresponds under the attribute of thought. Out of such a compound as this is formed man, composed of body and mind; two parallel and correspondent modifications eternally answering one another. And not man only, but all other beings and things are similarly formed and similarly animated; the anima or mind of each varying according to the complicity of the organism of its material counterpart. Although body does not think, nor affect the mind's power of thinking, and mind does not control body, nor communicate to it either motion or rest or any influence from itself, yet body with all its properties is the object or ideate of mind: whatsoever body does, mind perceives; and the greater the energizing power of the first, the greater the perceiving power of the second. And this is not because they are adapted one to the other by some inconceivable preordinating power, but because mind and body are *una et eadem res*, the one absolute being affected in one and the same manner, but expressed under several attributes; the modes and affections of each attribute having that being for their cause, as he exists under that attribute of which they

are modes, and no other; idea being caused by idea, and body affected by body; the image on the retina being produced by the object reflected upon it, the idea or image in our minds by the idea of that object, &c. &c.

A solution so remote from all ordinary ways of thinking on these matters is so difficult to grasp, that one can hardly speak of it as being probable, or as being improbable. Probability extends only to what we can imagine as possible, and Spinoza's theory seems to lie beyond the range within which our judgment can exercise itself. In our own opinion, indeed, as we have already said, the entire subject is one with which we have no business; and the explanation of our nature, if it is ever to be explained to us, is reserved till we are in some other state of existence. We do not disbelieve Spinoza because what he suggests is in itself incredible. The chances may be millions to one against his being right; yet the real truth, if we knew it, would be probably at least as strange as his conception of it. But we are firmly convinced that of these questions, and of all like them, practical answers only lie within the reach of human faculties; and that in 'researches into the absolute' we are on the road which ends nowhere.

Among the difficulties, however, most properly akin to this philosophy itself, there is one most obvious, viz., that if the attributes of God be infinite, and each particular thing is expressed under them all, then mind and body express but an infinitesimal portion of the nature of each of ourselves; and this human nature

exists (*i.e.*, there exists corresponding modes of substance) in the whole infinity of the Divine nature under attributes differing each from each, and all from mind and all from body. That this must be so follows from the definition of the Infinite Being, and the nature of the distinction between the two attributes which are known to us; and if this be so, why does not the mind perceive something of all these other attributes? The objection is well expressed by a correspondent (Letter 67):—'It follows from what you say,' a friend writes to Spinoza, 'that the modification which constitutes my mind, and that which constitutes my body, although it be one and the same modification, yet must be expressed in an infinity of ways: one way by thought, a second way by extension, a third by some attribute unknown to me, and so on to infinity; the attributes being infinite in number, and the order and connection of modes being the same in them all. Why, then, does the mind perceive the modes of but one attribute only?'

Spinoza's answer is curious: unhappily, a fragment of his letter only is extant, so that it is too brief to be satisfactory:—

> In reply to your difficulty (he says), although each particular thing be truly in the Infinite mind, conceived in Infinite modes, the Infinite idea answering to all these cannot constitute one and the same mind of any single being, but must constitute Infinite minds. No one of all these Infinite ideas has any connection with another.

He means, we suppose, that God's mind only perceives, or can perceive, things under their Infinite expression, and that the idea of each several mode, under whatever attribute, constitutes a separate mind.

We do not know that we can add anything to this explanation; the difficulty lies in the audacious sweep of the speculation itself; we will, however, attempt an illustration, although we fear it will be to illustrate *obscurum per obscurius*. Let A B C D be four out of the Infinite number of the Divine attributes. A the attribute of mind; B the attribute of extension; C and D other attributes, the nature of which is not known to us. Now, A, as the attribute of mind, is that which perceives all which takes place under B C and D, but it is only as it exists in God that it forms the universal consciousness of all attributes at once. In its modifications it is combined separately with the modifications of each, constituting in combination with the modes of each attribute a separate being. As forming the mind of B, A perceives what takes place in B, but not what takes place in C or D. Combined with B, it forms the soul of the human body, and generally the soul of all modifications of extended substance; combined with C, it forms the soul of some other analogous being; combined with D, again of another; but the combinations are only in pairs, in which A is constant. A and B make one being, A and C another, A and D a third; but B will not combine with C, nor C with D; each attribute being, as it were, conscious only of itself. And therefore, although to those modifications of mind and extension which we call ourselves, there are corresponding modifications under C and D, and generally under each of the Infinite attributes of God, each of ourselves being in a sense Infinite—nevertheless, we neither have nor can

have any knowledge of ourselves in this Infinite aspect; our actual consciousness being limited to the phenomena of sensible experience.

English readers, however, are likely to care little for all this; they will look to the general theory, and judge of it as its aspect affects them. And first, perhaps, they will be tempted to throw aside as absurd the notion that their bodies go through the many operations which they experience them to do, undirected by their minds. It is a thing, they may say, at once preposterous and incredible. It is, however, less absurd than it seems; and, though we could not persuade ourselves to believe it, absurd in the sense of having nothing to be said for it, it certainly is not. It is far easier, for instance, to imagine the human body capable by its own virtue, and by the laws of material organization, of building a house, than of *thinking;* and yet men are allowed to say that the body thinks, without being regarded as candidates for a lunatic asylum. We see the seed shoot up into stem and leaf and throw out flowers; we observe it fulfilling processes of chemistry more subtle than were ever executed in Liebig's laboratory, and producing structures more cunning than man can imitate. The bird builds her nest, the spider shapes out its delicate web, and stretches it in the path of his prey; directed not by calculating thought, as we conceive ourselves to be, but by some motive influence, our ignorance of the nature of which we disguise from ourselves, and call it instinct, but which we believe at least to be some property residing in the organization.

We are not to suppose that the human body, the most complex of all material structures, has slighter powers in it than the bodies of a seed, a bird, or an insect. Let us listen to Spinoza himself:

There can be no doubt (he says) that this hypothesis is true; but unless I can prove it from experience, men will not, I fear, be induced even to reflect upon it calmly, so persuaded are they that it is by the mind only that their bodies are set in motion. And yet what body can or cannot do no one has yet determined; body, *i. e.*, by the law of its own nature, and without assistance from mind. No one has so probed the human frame as to have detected all its functions and exhausted the list of them; there are powers exhibited by animals far exceeding human sagacity; and, again, feats are performed by somnambulists on which in the waking state the same persons would never venture—itself a proof that body is able to accomplish what mind can only admire. Men *say* that mind moves body, but how it moves it they cannot tell, or what degree of motion it can impart to it; so that, in fact, they do not know what they say, and are only confessing their own ignorance in specious language. They will answer me, that whether or not they understand how it can be, yet that they are assured by plain experience that unless mind could perceive, body would be altogether inactive; they know that it depends on the mind whether the tongue speaks or is silent. But do they not equally experience that if their bodies are paralyzed their minds cannot think?—that if their bodies are asleep their minds are without power?—that their minds are not at all times equally able to exert themselves even on the same subject, but depend on the state of their bodies? And as for experience proving that the members of the body can be controlled by the mind, I fear experience proves very much the reverse. But it is absurd (they rejoin) to attempt to explain from the mere laws of body such things as pictures, or palaces, or works of art; the body could not build a church unless mind directed it. I have shown, however, that we do not yet know what body can or cannot do, or what would naturally follow from the structure of it; that we experience in the feats of somnambulists something which antecedently to that experience would have seemed incredible. This fabric of the human body

exceeds infinitely any contrivance of human skill, and an infinity of things, as I have already proved, ought to follow from it.

We are not concerned to answer this reasoning, although if the matter were one the debating of which could be of any profit, it would undoubtedly have its weight, and would require to be patiently considered. Life is too serious, however, to be wasted with impunity over speculations in which certainty is impossible, and in which we are trifling with what is inscrutable.

Objections of a far graver kind were anticipated by Spinoza himself, when he went on to gather out of his philosophy 'that the mind of man being part of the Infinite intelligence, when we say that such a mind perceives this thing or that, we are, in fact, saying that God perceives it, not as he is Infinite, but as he is represented by the nature of this or that idea; and similarly, when we say that a man does this or that action, we say that God does it, not *quâ* he is Infinite, but *quâ* he is expressed in that man's nature.' 'Here,' he says, 'many readers will no doubt hesitate, and many difficulties will occur to them in the way of such a supposition.'

We confess that we ourselves are among these hesitating readers. As long as the Being whom Spinoza so freely names remains surrounded with the associations which in this country we bring with us out of our childhood, not all the logic in the world would make us listen to language such as this. It is not so—we know it, and that is enough. We are well aware of the phalanx of difficulties which lie about our theistic

conceptions. They are quite enough, if religion depended on speculative consistency, and not in obedience of life, to perplex and terrify us. What are we? what *is* anything? If it be not Divine—what is it then? If created—out of what is it created? and how created —and why? These questions, and others far more momentous which we do not enter upon here, may be asked and cannot be answered; but we cannot any the more consent to Spinoza on the ground that he alone consistently provides an answer; because, as we have said again and again, we do not care to have them answered at all. Conscience is the single tribunal to which we choose to be referred, and conscience declares imperatively that what he says is not true. It is painful to speak of all this, and as far as possible we designedly avoid it. Pantheism is not Atheism, but the Infinite Positive and the Infinite Negative are not so remote from one another in their practical bearings; only let us remember that we are far indeed from the truth if we think that God to Spinoza was *nothing else* but that world which we experience. It is but one of infinite expressions of him—a conception which makes us giddy in the effort to realize it.

We have arrived at last at the outwork of the whole matter in its bearings upon life and human duty. It was in the search after this last, that Spinoza, as we said, travelled over so strange a country, and we now expect his conclusions. To discover the true good of man, to direct his actions to such ends as will secure to him real and lasting felicity, and, by a comparison of

his powers with the objects offered to them, to ascertain how far they are capable of arriving at these objects, and by what means they can best be trained towards them—is the aim which Spinoza assigns to philosophy. 'Most people,' he adds, 'deride or vilify their nature; it is a better thing to endeavour to understand it; and however extravagant my proceeding may be thought, I propose to analyze the properties of that nature as if it were a mathematical figure.' Mind being, as he conceives himself to have shown, nothing else than the idea corresponding to this or that affection of body, we are not, therefore, to think of it as a faculty, but simply and merely as an act. There is no general power called intellect, any more than there is any general abstract volition, but only *hic et ille intellectus et hæc et illa volitio.*

Again, by the word Mind is understood not merely an act or acts of will or intellect, but all forms also of consciousness of sensation or emotion. The human body being composed of many small bodies, the mind is similarly composed of many minds, and the unity of body and of mind depends on the relation which the component portions maintain towards each other. This is obviously the case with body; and if we can translate metaphysics into common experience, it is equally the case with mind. There are pleasures of sense and pleasures of intellect; a thousand tastes, tendencies, and inclinations form our mental composition; and since one contradicts another, and each has a tendency to become dominant, it is only in the harmonious equipoise of their several activities in their due and just

subordination, that any unity of action or consistency of feeling is possible. After a masterly analysis of all these tendencies (the most complete by far which has ever been made by any moral philosopher), Spinoza arrives at the principles under which unity and consistency can be obtained as the condition upon which a being so composed can look for any sort of happiness; and these principles, arrived at as they are by a route so different, are the same, and are proposed by Spinoza as being the same, as those of the Christian religion.

It might seem impossible in a system which binds together in so inexorable a sequence the relations of cause and effect, to make a place for the action of self-control; but consideration will show that, however vast the difference between those who deny and those who affirm the liberty of the will (in the sense in which the expression is usually understood), it is not a difference which affects the conduct or alters the practical bearings of it. Conduct may be determined by laws—laws as absolute as those of matter; and yet the one as well as the other may be brought under control by a proper understanding of those laws. Now, experience seems plainly to say, that while all our actions arise out of desire—that whatever we do, we do for the sake of something which we wish to be or to obtain—we are differently affected towards what is proposed to us as an object of desire, in proportion as we understand the nature of such object in itself and in its consequences. The better we know, the better we act; and the fallacy of all common arguments against necessitarianism lies

in the assumption that it leaves no room for self-direction: it merely insists, in exact conformity with experience, on the conditions under which self-determination is possible. Conduct, according to the necessitarian, depends on knowledge. Let a man certainly know that there is poison in the cup of wine before him, and he will not drink it. By the law of cause and effect, his desire for the wine is overcome by the fear of the pain or the death which will follow. So with everything which comes before him. Let the consequences of any action be clear, definite, and inevitable, and though Spinoza would not say that the knowledge of them will be absolutely sufficient to determine the conduct (because the clearest knowledge may be overborne by violent passion), yet it is the best which we have to trust to, and will do much if it cannot do all.

On this hypothesis, after a diagnosis of the various tendencies of human nature, called commonly the passions and affections, he returns upon the nature of our ordinary knowledge to derive out of it the means for their subordination. All these tendencies of themselves seek their own objects—seek them blindly and immoderately; and the mistakes and the unhappinesses of life arise from the want of due understanding of these objects, and a just moderation of the desire for them. His analysis is remarkably clear, but it is too long for us to enter upon it; the important thing being the character of the control which is to be exerted. To arrive at this, he employs a distinction of great practical utility, and which is peculiarly his own.

Following his tripartite division of knowledge, he finds all kinds of it arrange themselves under one of two classes, and to be either adequate or inadequate. By adequate knowledge he does not mean what is exhaustive and complete, but what, as far as it goes, is distinct and unconfused: by inadequate, he means what we know merely as fact either derived from our own sensations or from the authority of others, while of the connection of it with other facts, of the causes, effects, or meaning of it we know nothing. We may have an adequate idea of a circle, though we are unacquainted with all the properties which belong to it; we conceive it distinctly as a figure generated by the rotation of a line, one end of which is stationary. Phenomena, on the other hand, however made known to us—phenomena of the senses, and phenomena of experience, as long as they remain phenomena merely, and unseen in any higher relation—we can never know except as inadequately. We cannot tell what outward things are by coming in contact with certain features of them. We have a very imperfect acquaintance even with our own bodies, and the sensations which we experience of various kinds rather indicate to us the nature of these bodies themselves than of the objects which affect them. Now, it is obvious that the greater part of mankind act only upon knowledge of this latter kind. The amusements, even the active pursuits, of most of us remain wholly within the range of uncertainty, and, therefore, are full of hazard and precariousness: little or nothing issues as we expect. We look for pleasure and we find

pain; we shun one pain and find a greater; and thus arises the ineffectual character which we so complain of in life — the disappointments, failures, mortifications which form the material of so much moral meditation on the vanity of the world. Much of all this is inevitable from the constitution of our nature. The mind is too infirm to be entirely occupied with higher knowledge. The conditions of life oblige us to act in many cases which cannot be understood by us except with the utmost inadequacy; and the resignation to the higher will which has determined all things in the wisest way, is imperfect in the best of us. Yet much is possible, if not all; and, although through a large tract of life 'there comes one event to all, to the wise and to the unwise,' 'yet wisdom excelleth folly as far as light excelleth darkness.' The phenomena of experience, after inductive experiment, and just and careful consideration, arrange themselves under laws uniform in their operation, and furnishing a guide to the judgment; and over all things, although the interval must remain unexplored for ever, because what we would search into is Infinite, may be seen the beginning of all things, the absolute eternal God. 'Mens humana,' Spinoza continues, 'quædam agit, quædam vero patitur.' In so far as it is influenced by inadequate ideas—'eatenus patitur'—it is passive and in bondage, it is the sport of fortune and caprice: in so far as its ideas are adequate—'eatenus agit'—it is active, it is itself. While we are governed by outward temptations, by the casual pleasures, by the fortunes or the misfortunes of

life, we are but instruments, yielding ourselves to be acted upon as the animal is acted on by its appetites, or the inanimate matter by the laws which bind it; we are slaves—instruments, it may be, of some higher purpose in the order of nature, but in ourselves nothing; instruments which are employed for a special work, and which are consumed in effecting it. So far, on the contrary, as we know clearly what we do, as we understand what we are, and direct our conduct not by the passing emotion of the moment, but by a grave, clear, and constant knowledge of what is really good, so far we are said to act—we are ourselves the spring of our own activity—we pursue the genuine well-being of our entire nature, and *that* we can always find, and it never disappoints us when found.

All things desire life; all things seek for energy, and fuller and ampler being. The component parts of man, his various appetites and passions, are seeking larger activity while pursuing each its immoderate indulgence; and it is the primary law of every single being that it so follows what will give it increased vitality. Whatever will contribute to such increase is the proper good of each; and the good of man as a united being is measured and determined by the effect of it upon his collective powers. The appetites gather power from their several objects of desire; but the power of the part is the weakness of the whole; and man as a collective person gathers life, being, and self-mastery only from the absolute good,—the source of all real good, and truth, and energy,—that is, God. The love of God

is the extinction of all other loves and all other desires. To know God, as far as man can know him, is power, self-government, and peace. And this is virtue, and this is blessedness.

Thus, by a formal process of demonstration, we are brought round to the old conclusions of theology; and Spinoza protests that it is no new doctrine which he is teaching, but that it is one which in various dialects has been believed from the beginning of the world. Happiness depends on the consistency and coherency of character, and that coherency can only be given by the knowledge of the One Being, to know whom is to know all things adequately, and to love whom is to have conquered every other inclination. The more entirely our minds rest on Him—the more distinctly we regard all things in their relation to Him, the more we cease to be under the dominion of external things; we surrender ourselves consciously to do His will, and as living men and not as passive things we become the instruments of His power. When the true nature and true causes of our affections become clear to us, they have no more power to influence us. The more we understand, the less can feeling sway us; we know that all things are what they are, because they are so constituted that they could not be otherwise, and we cease to be angry with our brother, because he disappoints us; we shall not fret at calamity, nor complain of fortune, because no such thing as fortune exists; and if we fail it is better than if we had succeeded, not perhaps for ourselves, yet for the universe. We cannot

fear, when nothing can befall us except what God wills, and we shall not violently hope, when the future, whatever it be, will be the best which is possible. Seeing all things in their place in the everlasting order, Past and Future will not affect us. The temptation of present pleasure will not overcome the certainty of future pain, for the pain will be as sure as the pleasure, and we shall see all things under a rule of adamant. The foolish and the ignorant are led astray by the idea of contingency, and expect to escape the just issues of their actions; the wise man will know that each action brings with it its inevitable consequences, which even God cannot change without ceasing to be Himself.

In such a manner, through all the conditions of life, Spinoza pursues the advantages which will accrue to man from the knowledge of God, God and man being what his philosophy has described them. His practical teaching is singularly beautiful; although much of its beauty is perhaps due to associations which have arisen out of Christianity, and which in the system of Pantheism have no proper abiding place. Retaining, indeed, all that is beautiful in Christianity, he even seems to have relieved himself of the more fearful features of the general creed. He acknowledges no hell, no devil, no positive and active agency at enmity with God; but sees in all things infinite gradations of beings, all in their way obedient, and all fulfilling the part allotted to them. Doubtless a pleasant exchange and a grateful deliverance, if only we could persuade ourselves that a hundred pages of

judiciously arranged demonstrations could really and indeed have worked it for us; if we could indeed believe that we could have the year without its winter, day without night, sunlight without shadow. Evil is unhappily too real a thing to be so disposed of.

But if we cannot believe Spinoza's system taken in its entire completeness, yet we may not blind ourselves to the disinterestedness and calm nobility which pervades his theories of human life and obligation. He will not hear of a virtue which desires to be rewarded. Virtue is the power of God in the human soul, and that is the exhaustive end of all human desire. 'Beatitudo non est virtutis pretium, sed ipsa virtus. Nihil aliud est quam ipsa animi acquiescentia, quæ ex Dei intuitivâ cognitione oritur.' The same spirit of generosity exhibits itself in all his conclusions. The ordinary objects of desire, he says, are of such a kind that for one man to obtain them is for another to lose them; and this alone would suffice to prove that they are not what any man should labour after. But the fulness of God suffices for us all; and he who possesses this good desires only to communicate it to every one, and to make all mankind as happy as himself. And again:—'The wise man will not speak in society of his neighbour's faults, and sparingly of the infirmity of human nature; but he will speak largely of human virtue and human power, and of the means by which that nature can best be perfected, so to lead men to put away that fear and aversion with which they look on goodness, and learn with relieved hearts to love and

desire it.' And once more:—'He who loves God will not desire that God should love him in return with any partial or particular affection, for that is to desire that God for his sake should change His everlasting nature and become lower than himself.'

One grave element, indeed, of a religious faith would seem in such a system to be necessarily wanting. Where individual action is resolved into the modified activity of the Universal Being, all absorbing and all evolving, the individuality of the personal man is but an evanescent and unreal shadow. Such individuality as we now possess, whatever it be, might continue to exist in a future state as really as it exists in the present, and those to whom it belongs might be anxious naturally for its persistence. Yet it would seem that if the soul be nothing except the idea of a body actually existing, when that body is decomposed into its elements, the soul corresponding to it must accompany it into an answering dissolution. And this, indeed, Spinoza in one sense actually affirms, when he denies to the mind any power of retaining consciousness of what has befallen it in life, 'nisi durante corpore.' But Spinozism is a philosophy full of surprises; and our calculations of what *must* belong to it are perpetually baffled. The imagination, the memory, the senses, whatever belongs to inadequate perception, perish necessarily and eternally; and the man who has been the slave of his inclinations, who has no knowledge of God, and no active possession of himself, having in life

possessed no personality, loses in death the appearance of it with the dissolution of the body.

Nevertheless, there is in God an idea expressing the essence of the mind, united to the mind as the mind is united to the body, and thus there is in the soul something of an everlasting nature which cannot utterly perish. And here Spinoza, as he often does in many of his most solemn conclusions, deserts for a moment the thread of his demonstrations, and appeals to the consciousness. In spite of our non-recollection of what passed before our birth, in spite of all difficulties from the dissolution of the body, 'Nihilominus,' he says, 'sentimus experimurque nos æternos esse. Nam mens non minus res illas sentit quas intelligendo concipit, quam quas in memoriâ habet. Mentis enim oculi quibus res videt observatque sunt ipsæ demonstrationes.'

This perception, immediately revealed to the mind, falls into easy harmony with the rest of the system. As the mind is not a faculty, but an act or acts,—not a power of perception, but the perception itself, in its high union with the highest object (to use the metaphysical language which Coleridge has made popular and partially intelligible), the object and the subject become one. If knowledge be followed as it ought to be followed, and all objects of knowledge be regarded in their relations to the One Absolute Being, the knowledge of particular outward things, of nature, or life, or history, becomes, in fact, knowledge of God; and the more complete or adequate such knowledge, the

more the mind is raised above what is perishable in the phenomena to the idea or law which lies beyond them. It learns to dwell exclusively upon the eternal, not upon the temporary; and being thus occupied with the everlasting laws, and its activity subsisting in its perfect union with them, it contracts in itself the character of the objects which possess it. Thus we are emancipated from the conditions of duration; we are liable even to death only *quatenus patimur*, as we are passive things and not active intelligences; and the more we possess such knowledge and are possessed by it, the more entirely the passive is superseded by the active—so that at last the human soul may 'become of such a nature that the portion of it which will perish with the body in comparison with that of it which shall endure, shall be insignificant and *nullius momenti.*' (Eth. v. 38.)

Such are the principal features of a philosophy, the influence of which upon Europe, direct and indirect, it is not easy to over-estimate. The account of it is far from being an account of the whole of Spinoza's labours; his 'Tractatus Theologico-Politicus' was the forerunner of German historical criticism; the whole of which has been but the application of principles laid down in that remarkable work. But this is not a subject on which, upon the present occasion, we have cared to enter. We have designedly confined ourselves to the system which is most associated with the name of its author. It is this which has been really powerful, which has stolen over the minds even of thinkers

who imagine themselves most opposed to it. It has appeared in the absolute Pantheism of Schelling and Hegel, in the Pantheistic Christianity of Herder and Schleiermacher.. Passing into practical life it has formed the strong, shrewd judgment of Goethe, while again it has been able to unite with the theories of the most extreme materialism.

It lies too, perhaps (and here its influence has been unmixedly good), at the bottom of that more reverent contemplation of nature which has caused the success of our modern landscape painting, which inspired Wordsworth's poetry, and which, if ever physical science is to become an instrument of intellectual education, must first be infused into the lessons of nature; the sense of that 'something' interfused in the material world—

> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;—
> A motion and a spirit, which impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.

If we shrink from regarding the extended universe, with Spinoza, as an actual manifestation of Almighty God, we are unable to rest in the mere denial that it is this. We go on to ask what *it is*, and we are obliged to conclude thus much at least of it, that every smallest being was once a thought in His mind; and in the study of what He has made, we are really and truly studying a revelation of Himself.

It is not here, it is not on the physical, it is rather

on the moral side, that the stumbling-block is lying; in that excuse for evil and for evil men which the necessitarian theory will furnish, disguise it in what fair sounding words we will. So plain this is, that common sense people, and especially English people, cannot bring themselves even to consider the question without impatience, and turn disdainfully and angrily from a theory which confuses their instincts of right and wrong. Although, however, error on this side is infinitely less mischievous than on the other, no vehement error can exist in this world with impunity; and it does appear that in our common view of these matters we have closed our eyes to certain grave facts of experience, and have given the fatalist a vantage ground of real truth which we ought to have considered and allowed. At the risk of tediousness we shall enter briefly into this unpromising ground. Life and the necessities of life are our best philosophers if we will only listen honestly to what they say to us; and dislike the lesson as we may, it is cowardice which refuses to hear it.

The popular belief is, that right and wrong lie before every man, and that he is free to choose between them, and the responsibility of choice rests with himself. The fatalist's belief is that every man's actions are determined by causes external and internal, over which he has no power, leaving no room for any moral choice whatever. The first is contradicted by facts, the second by the instinct of conscience. Even Spinoza allows that for practical purposes we are obliged to regard the

future as contingent, and ourselves as able to influence it; and it is incredible that both our inward convictions and our outward conduct should be built together upon a falsehood. But if, as Butler says, whatever be the speculative account of the matter, we are practically forced to regard ourselves as free, this is but half the truth, for it may be equally said that practically we are forced to regard each other as *not* free; and to make allowance, every moment, for influences for which we cannot hold each other personally responsible. If not,—if every person of sound mind (in the common acceptation of the term) be equally able at all times to act right if only he *will*,—why all the care which we take of children? why the pains to keep them from bad society? why do we so anxiously watch their disposition, to determine the education which will best answer to it? Why in cases of guilt do we vary our moral censure according to the opportunities of the offender? Why do we find excuses for youth, for inexperience, for violent natural passion, for bad education, bad example? Why, except that we feel that all these things do affect the culpability of the guilty person, and that it is folly and inhumanity to disregard them? But what we act upon in private life we cannot acknowledge in our ethical theories, and, while our conduct in detail is humane and just, we have been contented to gather our speculative philosophy out of the broad and coarse generalizations of political necessity. In the swift haste of social life we must indeed treat men as we find them. We have no time to make allowances; and the

graduation of punishment by the scale of guilt is a mere impossibility. A thief is a thief in the law's eye though he has been trained from his cradle in the kennels of St Giles's; and definite penalties must be attached to definite acts, the conditions of political life not admitting of any other method of dealing with them. But it is absurd to argue from such rude necessity that each act therefore, by whomsoever committed, is of specific culpability. The act is one thing, the moral guilt is another. There are many cases in which, as Butler again allows, if we trace a sinner's history to the bottom, the guilt attributable to himself appears to vanish altogether.

This is plain matter of fact, and as long as we continue to deny or ignore it, there will be found men (not bad men, but men who love the truth as much as ourselves), who will see only what we neglect, and will insist upon it, and build their systems upon it.

And again, if less obvious, yet not less real, are those natural tendencies which each of us brings with him into the world,—which we did not make, and yet which almost as much determine what we are to be, as the properties of the seed determine the tree which shall grow from it. Men are self-willed, or violent, or obstinate, or weak, or generous, or affectionate; there is as large difference in their dispositions as in the features of their faces. Duties which are easy to one, another finds difficult or impossible. It is with morals as it is with art. Two children are taught to draw; one learns with ease, the other hardly or never. In

vain the master will show him what to do. It seems so easy: it seems as if he had only to *will*, and the thing would be done; but it is not so. Between the desire and the execution lies the incapable organ which only wearily, and after long labour, imperfectly accomplishes what is required of it. And the same, *to a certain extent*, unless we will deny the patent facts of experience, holds true in moral actions. No wonder, therefore, that evaded or thrust aside as these things are in the popular beliefs, as soon as they are recognized in their full reality they should be mistaken for the whole truth, and the free-will theory be thrown aside as a chimera.

It may be said, and it often is said, that such reasonings are merely sophistical—that however we entangle ourselves in logic, we are conscious that we are free; we know—we are as sure as we are of our existence—that we have power to act this way or that way, exactly as we choose. But this is less plain than it seems; and if granted, it proves less than it appears to prove. It may be true that we can act as we choose, but can we *choose?* Is not our choice determined for us? We cannot determine from the fact, because we always *have chosen* as soon as we act, and we cannot replace the conditions in such a way as to discover whether we could have chosen anything else. The stronger motive may have determined our volition without our perceiving it; and if we desire to prove our independence of motive, by showing that we *can* choose something different from that which we should

naturally have chosen, we still cannot escape from the circle, this very desire becoming, as Mr Hume observes, itself a *motive*. Again, consciousness of the possession of any power may easily be delusive; we can properly judge what our powers are only by what they have actually accomplished; we know what we *have* done, and we may infer from having done it that our power was equal to what it achieved. But it is easy for us to overrate our strength if we try to measure our abilities in themselves. A man who can leap five yards may think that he can leap six; yet he may try and fail. A man who can write prose may only learn that he cannot write poetry from the badness of the verses which he produces. To the appeal to consciousness of power there is always an answer:—that we may believe ourselves to possess it, but that experience proves that we may be deceived.

There is, however, another group of feelings which cannot be set aside in this way, which do prove that, in some sense or other, in some degree or other, we are the authors of our own actions. It is one of the clearest of all inward phenomena, that where two or more courses involving moral issues are before us, whether we have a consciousness of *power* to choose between them or not, we have a consciousness that we *ought* to choose between them; a sense of duty—ὅτι δεῖ τοῦτο πράττειν—as Aristotle expresses it, which we cannot shake off. Whatever this consciousness involves (and some measure of freedom it must involve or it is non sense), the feeling exists within us, and refuses to yield

before all the batteries of logic. It is not that of the two courses we know that one is in the long run the best, and the other more immediately tempting. We have a sense of obligation irrespective of consequence, the violation of which is followed again by a sense of self-disapprobation, of censure, of blame. In vain will Spinoza tell us that such feelings, incompatible as they are with the theory of powerlessness, are mistakes arising out of a false philosophy. They are primary facts of sensation most vivid in minds of most vigorous sensibility; and although they may be extinguished by habitual profligacy, or possibly, perhaps, destroyed by logic, the paralysis of the conscience is no more a proof that it is not a real power of perceiving real things, than blindness is a proof that sight is not a real power. The perceptions of worth and worthlessness are not conclusions of reasoning, but immediate sensations like those of seeing and hearing; and although, like the other senses, they may be mistaken sometimes in the accounts they render to us, the fact of the existence of such feelings at all proves that there is something which corresponds to them. If there be any such things as 'true ideas,' or clear, distinct perceptions at all, this of praise and blame is one of them, and according to Spinoza's own rule we must accept what it involves. And it involves that somewhere or other the influence of causes ceases to operate, and that some degree of power there is in men of self-determination, by the amount of which, and not by their specific actions, moral merit or demerit is to be measured.

Speculative difficulties remain in abundance. It will be said in a case, *e. g.* of moral trial, that there may have been *power;* but was there *power enough* to resist the temptation? If there was, then it was resisted. If there was not, there was no responsibility. We must answer again from practical instinct. We refuse to allow men to be considered all equally guilty who have committed the same faults; and we insist that their actions must be measured against their opportunities. But a similar conviction assures us that there is somewhere a point of freedom. Where that point is—where other influences terminate, and responsibility begins—will always be of intricate and often impossible solution. But if there be such a point *at* all, it is fatal to necessitarianism, and man is what he has been hitherto supposed to be—an exception in the order of nature, with a power not differing in degree but differing in kind from those of other creatures. Moral life, like all life, is a mystery; and as to anatomize the body will not reveal the secret of animation, so with the actions of the moral man. The spiritual life, which alone gives them meaning and being, glides away before the logical dissecting knife, and leaves it but a corpse to work upon.

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES.[1]

TO be entirely just in our estimate of other ages is not difficult—it is impossible. Even what is passing in our presence we see but through a glass darkly. The mind as well as the eye adds something of its own, before an image, even of the clearest object, can be painted upon it.

And in historical inquiries, the most instructed thinkers have but a limited advantage over the most illiterate. Those who know the most, approach least to agreement. The most careful investigations are diverging roads—the further men travel upon them, the greater the interval by which they are divided. In the eyes of David Hume the history of the Saxon Princes is 'the scuffling of kites and crows.' Father Newman would mortify the conceit of a degenerate England by pointing to the sixty saints and the hundred confessors who were trained in her royal palaces

[1] From *Fraser's Magazine*, 1857.

for the Calendar of the Blessed. How vast a chasm yawns between these two conceptions of the same era! Through what common term can the student pass from one into the other?

Or, to take an instance yet more noticeable. The history of England scarcely interests Mr Macaulay before the Revolution of the seventeenth century. To Lord John Russell, the Reformation was the first outcome from centuries of folly and ferocity; and Mr Hallam's more temperate language softens, without concealing, a similar conclusion. These writers have all studied what they describe. Mr Carlyle has studied the same subject with power at least equal to theirs, and to him the greatness of English character was waning with the dawn of English literature; the race of heroes was already failing. The era of action was yielding before the era of speech.

All these views may seem to ourselves exaggerated; we may have settled into some moderate *via media*, or have carved out our own ground on an original pattern; but if we are wise, the differences in other men's judgments will teach us to be diffident. The more distinctly we have made history bear witness in favour of our particular opinions, the more we have multiplied the chances against the truth of our own theory.

Again, supposing that we have made a truce with 'opinions,' properly so called; supposing we have satisfied ourselves that it is idle to quarrel upon points on which good men differ, and that it is better to attend rather to what we certainly know; supposing that,

either from superior wisdom, or from the conceit of superior wisdom, we have resolved that we will look for human perfection neither exclusively in the Old World nor exclusively in the New—neither among Catholics nor Protestants, among Whigs or Tories, heathens or Christians—that we have laid aside accidental differences, and determined to recognize only moral distinctions, to love moral worth, and to hate moral evil, wherever we find them;—even supposing all this, we have not much improved our position—we cannot leap from our shadow.

Eras, like individuals, differ from one another in the species of virtue which they encourage. In one age, we find the virtues of the warrior; in the next, of the saint. The ascetic and the soldier in their turn disappear; an industrial era succeeds, bringing with it the virtues of common sense, of grace, and refinement. There is the virtue of energy and command, there is the virtue of humility and patient suffering. All these are different, and all are, or may be, of equal moral value; yet, from the constitution of our minds, we are so framed that we cannot equally appreciate all; we sympathize instinctively with the person who most represents our own ideal—with the period when the graces which most harmonize with our own tempers have been especially cultivated. Further, if we leave out of sight these refinements, and content ourselves with the most popular conceptions of morality, there is this immeasurable difficulty—so great, yet so little considered,—that goodness is positive as well as negative, and consists in the active accomplishment of certain

things which we are bound to do, as well as in the abstaining from things which we are bound not to do. And here the warp and woof vary in shade and pattern. Many a man, with the help of circumstances, may pick his way clear through life, having never violated one prohibitive commandment, and yet at last be fit only for the place of the unprofitable servant—he may not have committed either sin or crime, yet never have felt the pulsation of a single unselfish emotion. Another, meanwhile, shall have been hurried by an impulsive nature into fault after fault—shall have been reckless, improvident, perhaps profligate, yet be fitter after all for the kingdom of heaven than the Pharisee—fitter, because against the catalogue of faults there could perhaps be set a fairer list of acts of comparative generosity and self-forgetfulness—fitter, because to those who love much, much is forgiven. Fielding had no occasion to make Blifil, behind his decent coat, a traitor and a hypocrite. It would have been enough to have coloured him in and out alike in the steady hues of selfishness, afraid of offending the upper powers as he was afraid of offending Allworthy—not from any love for what was good, but solely because it would be imprudent—because the pleasure to be gained was not worth the risk of consequences. Such a Blifil would have answered the novelist's purpose—for he would have remained a worse man in the estimation of some of us than Tom Jones.

So the truth is; but unfortunately it is only where accurate knowledge is stimulated by affection, that we

are able to feel it. Persons who live beyond our own circle, and, still more, persons who have lived in another age, receive what is called justice, not charity; and justice is supposed to consist in due allotments of censure for each special act of misconduct, leaving merit unrecognized. There are many reasons for this harsh method of judging. We must decide of men by what we know, and it is easier to know faults than to know virtues. Faults are specific, easily described, easily appreciated, easily remembered. And again, there is, or may be, hypocrisy in virtue; but no one pretends to vice who is not vicious. The bad things which can be proved of a man we know to be genuine. He was a spendthrift, he was an adulterer, he gambled, he equivocated. These are blots positive, unless untrue, and when they stand alone, tinge the whole character.

This also is to be observed in historical criticism. All men feel a necessity of being on some terms with their conscience, at their own expense or at another's. If they cannot part with their faults, they will at least call them by their right name when they meet with such faults elsewhere; and thus, when they find account of deeds of violence or sensuality, of tyranny, of injustice of man to man, of great and extensive suffering, or any of those other misfortunes which the selfishness of men has at various times occasioned, they will vituperate the doers of such things, and the age which has permitted them to be done, with the full emphasis of virtuous indignation, while all the time they are themselves doing things which will be described, with no less jus-

tice, in the same colours, by an equally virtuous posterity.

Historians are fond of recording the supposed sufferings of the poor in the days of serfdom and villenage; yet the records of the strikes of the last ten years, when told by the sufferers, contain pictures no less fertile in tragedy. We speak of famines and plagues under the Tudors and Stuarts; but the Irish famine, and the Irish plague of 1847, the last page of such horrors which has yet been turned over, is the most horrible of all. We can conceive a description of England during the year which has just closed over us (1856), true in all its details, containing no one statement which can be challenged, no single exaggeration which can be proved; and this description, if given without the correcting traits, shall make ages to come marvel why the Cities of the Plain were destroyed, and England was allowed to survive. The frauds of trusted men, high in power and high in supposed religion; the wholesale poisonings; the robberies; the adulteration of food—nay, of almost everything exposed for sale—the cruel usage of women—children murdered for the burial fees—life and property insecure in open day in the open streets—splendour such as the world never saw before upon earth, with vice and squalor crouching under its walls—let all this be written down by an enemy, or let it be ascertained hereafter by the investigation of a posterity which desires to judge us as we generally have judged our forefathers, and few years will show darker in the English annals than the

year which we have just left behind us. Yet we know, in the honesty of our hearts, how unjust such a picture would be. Our future advocate, if we are so happy as to find one, may not be able to disprove a single article in the indictment; and yet we know that, as the world goes, he will be right if he marks the year with a white stroke—as one in which, on the whole, the moral harvest was better than an average.

Once more: our knowledge of any man is always inadequate—even of the unit which each of us calls himself; and the first condition under which we can know a man at all is, that he be in essentials something like ourselves; that our own experience be an interpreter which shall open the secrets of his experience; and it often happens, even among our contemporaries, that we are altogether baffled. The Englishman and the Italian may understand each other's speech, but the language of each other's ideas has still to be learnt. Our long failures in Ireland have risen from a radical incongruity of character which has divided the Celt from the Saxon. And again, in the same country, the Catholic will be a mystery to the Protestant, and the Protestant to the Catholic. Their intellects have been shaped in opposite moulds; they are like instruments which cannot be played in concert. In the same way, but in a far higher degree, we are divided from the generations which have preceded us in this planet—we try to comprehend a Pericles or a Cæsar—an image rises before us which we seem to recognize as belonging to our common humanity. There is this feature which

is familiar to us—and this—and this. We are full of hope; the lineaments, one by one, pass into clearness; when suddenly the figure becomes enveloped in a cloud—some perplexity crosses our analysis, baffling it utterly, the phantom which we have evoked dies away before our eyes, scornfully mocking our incapacity to master it.

The English antecedent to the Reformation are nearer to us than Greeks or Romans; and yet there is a large interval between the baron who fought at Barnet field, and his polished descendant in a modern drawing-room. The scale of appreciation and the rule of judgment—the habits, the hopes, the fears, the emotions—have utterly changed.

In perusing modern histories, the present writer has been struck dumb with wonder at the facility with which men will fill in chasms in their information with conjecture; will guess at the motives which have prompted actions; will pass their censures, as if all secrets of the past lay out on an open scroll before them. He is obliged to say for himself that, wherever he has been fortunate enough to discover authentic explanations of English historical difficulties, it is rare indeed that he has found any conjecture, either of his own or of any other modern writer, confirmed. The true motive has almost invariably been of a kind which no modern experience could have suggested.

Thoughts such as these form a hesitating prelude to an expression of opinion on a controverted question. They will serve, however, to indicate the limits within

which the said opinion is supposed to be hazarded. And in fact, neither in this nor in any historical subject is the conclusion so clear that it can be enunciated in a definite form. The utmost which can be safely hazarded with history is to relate honestly ascertained facts, with only such indications of a judicial sentence upon them as may be suggested in the form in which the story is arranged.

Whether the monastic bodies of England, at the time of their dissolution, were really in that condition of moral corruption which is laid to their charge in the Act of Parliament by which they were dissolved, is a point which it seems hopeless to argue. Roman Catholic, and indeed almost all English, writers who are not committed to an unfavourable opinion by the ultra-Protestantism of their doctrines, seem to have agreed of late years that the accusations, if not false, were enormously exaggerated. The dissolution, we are told, was a predetermined act of violence and rapacity; and when the reports and the letters of the visitors are quoted in justification of the Government, the discussion is closed with the dismissal of every unfavourable witness from the court, as venal, corrupt, calumnious—in fact, as a suborned liar. Upon these terms the argument is easily disposed of; and if it were not that truth is in all matters better than falsehood, it would be idle to reopen a question which cannot be justly dealt with. No evidence can affect convictions which have been arrived at without evidence—and why should we attempt a task which it is hopeless to accomplish?

It seems necessary, however, to reassert the actual state of the surviving testimony from time to time, if it be only to sustain the links of the old traditions; and the present paper will contain one or two pictures of a peculiar kind, exhibiting the life and habits of those institutions, which have been lately met with chiefly among the unprinted Records. In anticipation of any possible charge of unfairness in judging from isolated instances, we disclaim simply all desire to judge—all wish to do anything beyond relating certain ascertained stories. Let it remain, to those who are perverse enough to insist upon it, an open question whether the monasteries were more corrupt under Henry the Eighth than they had been four hundred years earlier. The dissolution would have been equally a necessity; for no reasonable person would desire that bodies of men should have been maintained for the only business of singing masses, when the efficacy of masses was no longer believed. Our present desire is merely this—to satisfy ourselves whether the Government, in discharging a duty which could not be dispensed with, condescended to falsehood in seeking a vindication for themselves which they did not require; or whether they had cause really to believe the majority of the monastic bodies to be as they affirmed—whether, that is to say, there really were such cases either of flagrant immorality, neglect of discipline, or careless waste and prodigality, as to justify the general censure which was pronounced against the system by the Parliament and the Privy Council.

Secure in the supposed completeness with which Queen Mary's agents destroyed the Records of the visitation under her father, Roman Catholic writers have taken refuge in a disdainful denial; and the Anglicans, who for the most part, while contented to enjoy the fruits of the Reformation, detest the means by which it was brought about, have taken the same view. Bishop Latimer tells us that, when the Report of the visitors of the abbeys was read in the Commons House, there rose from all sides one long cry of 'Down with them.' But Bishop Latimer, in the opinion of High Churchmen, is not to be believed. Do we produce letters of the visitors themselves, we are told that they are the slanders prepared to justify a preconceived purpose of spoliation. No witness, it seems, will be admitted unless it be the witness of a friend. Unless some enemy of the Reformation can be found to confess the crimes which made the Reformation necessary, the crimes themselves are to be regarded as unproved. This is a hard condition. We appeal to Wolsey. Wolsey commenced the suppression. Wolsey first made public the infamies which disgraced the Church; while, notwithstanding, he died the devoted servant of the Church. This evidence is surely admissible? But no: Wolsey, too, must be put out of court. Wolsey was a courtier and a time-server. Wolsey was a tyrant's minion. Wolsey was—in short, we know not what Wolsey was, or what he was not. Who can put confidence in a charlatan? Behind the bulwarks of such objections, the champion of the abbeys may well believe himself secure.

And yet, unreasonable though these demands may be, it happens, after all, that we are able partially to gratify them. It is strange that, of all extant accusations against any one of the abbeys, the heaviest is from a quarter which even Lingard himself would scarcely call suspicious. No picture left us by Henry's visitors surpasses, even if it equals, a description of the condition of the Abbey of St Albans, in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, drawn by Morton, Henry the Seventh's minister, Cardinal Archbishop, Legate of the Apostolic See, in a letter addressed by him to the Abbot of St Albans himself. We must request our reader's special attention for the next two pages.

In the year 1489, Pope Innocent the Eighth—moved with the enormous stories which reached his ear of the corruption of the houses of religion in England—granted a commission to the Archbishop of Canterbury to make inquiries whether these stories were true, and to proceed to correct and reform as might seem good to him. The regular clergy were exempt from episcopal visitation, except under especial directions from Rome. The occasion had appeared so serious as to make extraordinary interference necessary.

On the receipt of the Papal commission, Cardinal Morton, among other letters, wrote the following letter :—

John, by Divine permission, Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of all England, Legate of the Apostolic See, to William, Abbot of the Monastery of St Albans, greeting.

We have received certain letters under lead, the copies whereof we herewith send you, from our most holy Lord and Father in Christ,

Innocent, by Divine Providence Pope, the eighth of that name. We therefore, John, the Archbishop, the visitor, reformer, inquisitor, and judge therein mentioned, in reverence for the Apostolic See, have taken upon ourselves the burden of enforcing the said commission: and have determined that we will proceed by, and according to, the full force, tenor, and effect of the same.

And it has come to our ears, being at once publicly notorious and brought before us upon the testimony of many witnesses worthy of credit, that you, the abbot afore-mentioned, have been of long time noted and diffamed, and do yet continue so noted, of simony, of usury, of dilapidation and waste of the goods, revenues, and possessions of the said monastery, and of certain other enormous crimes and excesses hereafter written. In the rule, custody, and administration of the goods, spiritual and temporal, of the said monastery you are so remiss, so negligent, so prodigal, that whereas the said monastery was of old times founded and endowed by the pious devotion of illustrious princes, of famous memory, heretofore kings of this land, the most noble progenitors of our most serene Lord and King that now is, in order that true religion might flourish there, that the name of the Most High, in whose honour and glory it was instituted, might be duly celebrated there;

And whereas, in days heretofore, the regular observance of the said rule was greatly regarded, and hospitality was diligently kept;

Nevertheless, for no little time, during which you have presided in the same monastery, you and certain of your fellow-monks and brethren (whose blood, it is feared, through your neglect, a severe Judge will require at your hand) have relaxed the measure and form of religious life; you have laid aside the pleasant yoke of contemplation, and all regular observances—hospitality, alms, and those other offices of piety which of old time were exercised and ministered therein have decreased, and by your faults, your carelessness, your neglect and deed, do daily decrease more and more, and cease to be regarded—the pious vows of the founders are defrauded of their just intent—the ancient rule of your order is deserted; and not a few of your fellow-monks and brethren, as we most deeply grieve to learn, giving themselves over to a reprobate mind, laying aside the fear of God, do lead only a life of lasciviousness—nay, as is horrible to relate, be not afraid to defile the holy places, even the very churches of God, by infamous intercourse with nuns, &c. &c.

You yourself, moreover, among other grave enormities and abominable crimes whereof you are guilty, and for which you are noted and diffamed, have, in the first place, admitted a certain married woman, named Elena Germyn, who has separated herself without just cause from her husband, and for some time past has lived in adultery with another man, to be a nun or sister in the house or Priory of Bray, lying, as you pretend, within your jurisdiction. You have next appointed the same woman to be prioress of the said house, notwithstanding that her said husband was living at the time, and is still alive. And finally, Father Thomas Sudbury, one of your brother monks, publicly, notoriously, and without interference or punishment from you, has associated, and still associates, with this woman as an adulterer with his harlot.

Moreover, divers other of your brethren and fellow-monks have resorted, and do resort, continually to her and other women at the same place, as to a public brothel or receiving house, and have received no correction therefor.

Nor is Bray the only house into which you have introduced disorder. At the nunnery of Sapwell, which you also contend to be under your jurisdiction, you change the prioresses and superiors again and again at your own will and caprice. Here, as well as at Bray, you depose those who are good and religious; you promote to the highest dignities the worthless and the vicious. The duties of the order are cast aside; virtue is neglected; and by these means so much cost and extravagance has been caused, that to provide means for your indulgence you have introduced certain of your brethren to preside in their houses under the name of guardians, when in fact they are no guardians, but thieves and notorious villains; and with their help you have caused and permitted the goods of the same priories to be dispensed, or to speak more truly to be dissipated, in the above-described corruptions and other enormous and accursed offences. Those places once religious are rendered and reputed as it were profane and impious; and by your own and your creatures' conduct, are so impoverished as to be reduced to the verge of ruin.

In like manner, also, you have dealt with certain other cells of monks which you say are subject to you, even within the monastery of the glorious proto-martyr Alban himself. You have dilapidated the common property; you have made away with the jewels; the copses, the woods, the underwood, almost all the oaks, and other

forest trees, to the value of eight thousand marks and more, you have made to be cut down without distinction, and they have by you been sold and alienated. The brethren of the abbey, some of whom, as is reported, are given over to all the evil things of the world, neglect the service of God altogether. They live with harlots and mistresses publicly and continuously, within the precincts of the monastery and without. Some of them, who are covetous of honour and promotion, and desirous therefore of pleasing your cupidity, have stolen and made away with the chalices and other jewels of the church. They have even sacrilegiously extracted the precious stones from the very shrine of St Alban; and you have not punished these men, but have rather knowingly supported and maintained them. If any of your brethren be living justly and religiously, if any be wise and virtuous, these you straightway depress and hold in hatred. . . . You . . .

But we need not transcribe further this overwhelming document. It pursues its way through mire and filth to its most lame and impotent conclusion. After all this, the Abbot was not deposed; he was invited merely to reconsider his doings, and, if possible, amend them. Such was Church discipline, even under an extraordinary commission from Rome. But the most incorrigible Anglican will scarcely question the truth of a picture drawn by such a hand; and it must be added that this one unexceptionable indictment lends at once assured credibility to the reports which were presented fifty years later, on the general visitation. There is no longer room for the presumptive objection that charges so revolting could not be true We see that in their worst form they could be true, and the evidence of Legh and Leghton, of Rice and Bedyll, as it remains in their letters to Cromwell, must be shaken in detail, or else it must be accepted as correct. We cannot

dream that Archbishop Morton was mistaken, or was misled by false information. St Albans was no obscure priory in a remote and thinly-peopled county. The Abbot of St Albans was a peer of the realm, taking precedence of bishops, living in the full glare of notoriety, within a few miles of London. The Archbishop had ample means of ascertaining the truth; and, we may be sure, had taken care to examine his ground before he left on record so tremendous an accusation. This story is true—as true as it is piteous. We will pause a moment over it before we pass from this, once more to ask our passionate Church friends whether still they will persist that the abbeys were no worse under the Tudors than they had been in their origin, under the Saxons, or under the first Norman and Plantagenet kings. We refuse to believe it. The abbeys which towered in the midst of the English towns, the houses clustered at their feet like subjects round some majestic queen, were images indeed of the civil supremacy which the Church of the Middle Ages had asserted for itself; but they were images also of an inner spiritual sublimity, which had won the homage of grateful and admiring nations. The heavenly graces had once descended upon the monastic orders, making them ministers of mercy, patterns of celestial life, breathing witnesses of the power of the Spirit in renewing and sanctifying the heart. And then it was that art and wealth and genius poured out their treasures to raise fitting tabernacles for the dwelling of so divine a soul. Alike in the village and the city, amongst the unadorned walls and lowly

roofs which closed in the humble dwellings of the laity, the majestic houses of the Father of mankind and of his especial servants rose up in sovereign beauty. And ever at the sacred gates sat Mercy, pouring out relief from a never-failing store to the poor and the suffering; ever within the sacred aisles the voices of holy men were pealing heavenwards in intercession for the sins of mankind; and such blessed influences were thought to exhale around those mysterious precincts, that even the poor outcasts of society—the debtor, the felon, and the outlaw—gathered round the walls as the sick men sought the shadow of the apostles, and lay there sheltered from the avenging hand, till their sins were washed from off their souls. The abbeys of the middle ages floated through the storms of war and conquest, like the ark upon the waves of the flood, in the midst of violence remaining inviolate, through the awful reverence which surrounded them. The abbeys, as Henry's visitors found them, were as little like what they once had been, as the living man in the pride of his growth is like the corpse which the earth makes haste to hide for ever.

The official letters which reveal the condition into which the monastic establishments had degenerated, are chiefly in the Cotton Library, and a large number of them have been published by the Camden Society. Besides these, however, there are in the Rolls House many other documents which confirm and complete the statements of the writers of those letters. There is a part of what seems to have been a digest of the 'Black

Book'—an epitome of iniquities, under the title of the 'Compendium Compertorum.' There are also reports from private persons, private entreaties for inquiry, depositions of monks in official examinations, and other similar papers, which, in many instances, are too offensive to be produced, and may rest in obscurity, unless contentious persons compel us to bring them forward. Some of these, however, throw curious light on the habits of the time, and on the collateral disorders which accompanied the more gross enormities. They show us, too, that although the dark tints predominate, the picture was not wholly black; that as just Lot was in the midst of Sodom, yet was unable by his single presence to save the guilty city from destruction, so in the latest era of monasticism there were types yet lingering of an older and fairer age, who, nevertheless, were not delivered, like the patriarch, but perished most of them with the institution to which they belonged. The hideous exposure is not untinted with fairer lines; and we see traits here and there of true devotion, mistaken but heroic.

Of these documents, two specimens shall be given in this place, one of either kind; and both, so far as we know, new to modern history. The first is so singular, that we print it as it is found—a genuine antique, fished up, in perfect preservation, out of the wreck of the old world.

About eight miles from Ludlow, in the county of Herefordshire, once stood the Abbey of Wigmore. There was Wigmore Castle a stronghold of the Welsh

Marches, now, we believe, a modern, well-conditioned mansion; and Wigmore Abbey, of which we do not hear that there are any remaining traces. Though now vanished, however, like so many of its kind, the house was three hundred years ago in vigorous existence; and when the stir commenced for an inquiry, the proceedings of the Abbot of this place gave occasion to a memorial which stands in the Rolls collection as follows:[1]—

Articles to be objected against John Smart, Abbot of the Monastery of Wigmore, in the county of Hereford, to be exhibited to the Right Honourable Lord Thomas Cromwell, the Lord Privy Seal and Vicegerent to the King's Majesty.

1. The said abbot is to be accused of simony, as well for taking money for advocation and putations of benefices, as for giving of orders, or more truly, selling them, and that to such persons which have been rejected elsewhere, and of little learning and light consideration.

2. The said abbot hath promoted to orders many scholars when all other bishops did refrain to give such orders on account of certain ordinances devised by the King's Majesty and his Council for the common weal of this realm. Then resorted to the said abbot scholars out of all parts, whom he would promote to orders by sixty at a time, and sometimes more, and otherwhiles less. And sometimes the said abbot would give orders by night within his chamber, and otherwise in the church early in the morning, and now and then at a chapel out of the abbey. So that there be many unlearned and light priests made by the said abbot. and in the diocese of Llandaff, and in the places aforenamed—a thousand, as it is esteemed, by the space of this seven years he hath made priests, and received not so little money of them as a thousand pounds for their orders.

3. Item, that the said abbot now of late, when he could not be suffered to give general orders, for the most part doth give orders by pretence of dispensation; and by that colour he promoteth them

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[1] Rolls House MS., *Miscellaneous Papers*, First Series. 356.

to orders by two and three, and takes much money of them, both for their orders and for to purchase their dispensations after the time he hath promoted them to their orders.

4. Item, the said abbot hath hurt and dismayed his tenants by putting them from their leases, and by enclosing their commons from them, and selling and utter wasting of the woods that were wont to relieve and succour them.

5. Item, the said abbot hath sold corradyes, to the damage of the said monastery.

6. Item, the said abbot hath alienated and sold the jewels and plate of the monastery, to the value of five hundred marks, *to purchase of the Bishop of Rome his bulls to be a bishop, and to annex the said abbey to his bishopric, to that intent that he should not for his misdeeds be punished, or deprived from his said abbey.*

7. Item, that the said abbot, long after that other bishops had renounced the Bishop of Rome, and professed them to the King's Majesty, did use, but more verily usurped, the office of a bishop by virtue of his first bulls purchased from Rome, till now of late, as it will appear by the date of his confirmation, if he have any.

8. Item, that he the said abbot hath lived viciously, and kept to concubines divers and many women that is openly known.

9. Item, that the said abbot doth yet continue his vicious living, as it is known, openly.

10. Item, that the said abbot hath spent and wasted much of the goods of the said monastery upon the aforesaid women.

11. Item, that the said abbot is malicious and very wrathful, not regarding what he saith or doeth in his fury or anger.

12. Item, that one Richard Gyles bought of the abbot and convent of Wigmore a corradye, and a chamber for him and his wife for term of their lives; and when the said Richard Gyles was aged and was very weak, he disposed his goods, and made executors to execute his will. And when the said abbot now being —— perceived that the said Richard Gyles was rich, and had not bequested so much of his goods to him as he would have had, the said abbot then came to the chamber of the said Richard Gyles, and put out thence all his friends and kinsfolk that kept him in his sickness; and then the said abbot set his brother and other of his servants to keep the sick man; and the night next coming after the said Richard Gyles's coffer was broken, and thence taken all that was in the same, to the value of

forty marks; and long after the said abbot confessed, before the executors of the said Richard Gyles, that it was his deed.

13. Item, that the said abbot, after he had taken away the goods of the said Richard Gyles, used daily to reprove and check the said Richard Gyles, and inquire of him where was more of his coin and money; and at the last the said abbot thought he lived too long, and made the sick man, after much sorry keeping, to be taken from his feather-bed, and laid upon a cold mattress, and kept his friends from him to his death.

15. Item, that the said abbot consented to the death and murdering of one John Tichkill, that was slain at his procuring, at the said monastery, by Sir Richard Cubley, canon and chaplain to the said abbot; which canon is and ever hath been since that time chief of the said abbot's council; and is supported to carry crossbowes, and to go whither he lusteth at any time, to fishing and hunting in the king's forests, parks, and chases; but little or nothing serving the quire, as other brethren do, neither corrected of the abbot for any trespass he doth commit.

16. Item, that the said abbot hath been perjured oft, as is to be proved and is proved; and as it is supposed, did not make a true inventory of the goods, chattels, and jewels of his monastery to the King's Majesty and his Council.

17. Item, that the said abbot hath infringed all the king's injunctions which were given him by Doctor Cave to observe and keep; and when he was denounced *in pleno capitulo* to have broken the same, he would have put in prison the brother as did denounce him to have broken the same injunctions, save that he was let by the convent there.

18. Item, that the said abbot hath openly preached against the doctrine of Christ, saying he ought not to love his enemy, but as he loves the devil; and that he should love his enemy's soul, but not his body.

19. Item, that the said abbot hath taken but small regard to the good-living of his household.

20. Item, that the said abbot hath had and hath yet a special favour to misdoers and manquellers, thieves, deceivers of their neighbours, and by them [is] most ruled and counselled.

21. Item, that the said abbot hath granted leases of farms and advocations first to one man, and took his fine, and also hath granted

the same lease to another man for more money; and then would make to the last taker a lease or writing, with an antedate of the first lease, which hath bred great dissension among gentlemen—as Master Blunt and Master Moysey, and other takers of such leases—and that often.

22. Item, the said abbot having the contrepaynes of leases in his keeping, hath, for money, rased out the number of years mentioned in the said leases, and writ a fresh number in the former taker's lease, and in the contrepayne thereof, to the intent to defraud the taker or buyer of the residue of such leases, of whom he hath received the money.

23. Item, the said abbot hath not, according to the foundation of his monastery, admitted reely tenants into certain alms-houses belonging to the said monastery; but of them he hath taken large fines, and some of them he hath put away that would not give him fines: whither poor, aged, and impotent people were wont to be freely admitted, and [to] receive the founder's alms that of the old customs [were] limited to the same—which alms is also diminished by the said abbot.

24. Item, that the said abbot did not deliver the bulls of his bishopric, that he purchased from Rome, to our sovereign lord the king's council till long after the time he had delivered and exhibited the bulls of his monastery to them.

25. Item, that the said abbot hath detained and yet doth detain servants' wages; and often when the said servants hath asked their wages, the said abbot hath put them into the stocks, and beat them.

26. Item, the said abbot, in times past, hath had a great devotion to ride to Llangarvan, in Wales, upon Lammas-day, to receive pardon there; and on the even he would visit one Mary Hawle, an old acquaintance of his, at the Welsh Poole, and on the morrow ride to the foresaid Llangarvan, to be confessed and absolved, and the same night return to company with the said Mary Hawle, at the Welsh Poole aforesaid, and Kateryn, the said Mary Hawle her first daughter, whom the said abbot long hath kept to concubine, and had children by her, that he lately married at Ludlow. And [there be] others that have been taken out of his chamber and put in the stocks within the said abbey, and others that have complained upon him to the king's council of the Marches of Wales; and the woman that dashed out his teeth, that he would have had by violence, I will not name now, nor

other men's wives, lest it would offend your good lordship to read or hear the same.

27. Item, the said abbot doth daily embezzle, sell, and convey the goods and chattels, and jewels of the said monastery, having no need so to do; for it is thought that he hath a thousand marks or two thousand lying by him that he hath gotten by selling of orders, and the jewels and plate of the monastery and corradyes; and it is to be feared that he will alienate all the rest, unless your good lordship speedily make redress and provision to let the same.

28. Item, the said abbot was accustomed yearly to preach at Leyntwarden on the Festival of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, where and when the people were wont to offer to an image there, and to the same the said abbot in his sermons would exhort them and encourage them. But now the oblations be decayed, the abbot, espying the image then to have a cote of silver plate and gilt, hath taken away of his own authority the said image, and the plate turned to his own use; and left his preaching there, saying it is no manner of profit to any man, and the plate that was about the said image was named to be worth forty pounds.

29. Item, the said abbot hath ever nourished enmity and discord among his brethren; and hath not encouraged them to learn the laws and the mystery of Christ. But he that least knew was most cherished by him; and he hath been highly displeased and [hath] disdained when his brothers would say that 'it is God's precept and doctrine that ye ought to prefer before your ceremonies and vain constitutions.' This saying was high disobedient, and should be grievously punished; when that lying, obloquy, flattery, ignorance, derision, contumely, discord, great swearing, drinking, hypocrisy, fraud, superstition, deceit, conspiracy to wrong their neighbour, and other of that kind, was had in special favour and regard. Laud and praise be to God that hath sent us the true knowledge. Honour and long prosperity to our sovereign lord and his noble council, that teaches to advance the same. Amen.

By John Lee, your faithful bedeman, and canon of the said monastery of Wigmore.

Postscript.—My good lord, there is in the said abbey a cross of fine gold and precious stones, whereof one diamond was esteemed by Doctor Booth, Bishop of Hereford, worth a hundred marks. In that cross is enclosed a piece of wood, named to be of the cross that

Christ died upon, and to the same hath been offering. And when it should be brought down to the church from the treasury, it was brought down with lights, and like reverence as should have been done to Christ Himself. I fear lest the abbot upon Sunday next, when he may enter the treasury, will take away the said cross and break it, or turn it to his own use, with many other precious jewels that be there.

All these articles afore written be true as to the substance and true meaning of them, though peradventure for haste and lack of counsel, some words be set amiss or out of their place. That I will be ready to prove forasmuch as lies in me, when it shall like your honourable lordship to direct your commission to men (or any man) that will be indifferent and not corrupt to sit upon the same, at the said abbey, where the witnesses and proofs be most ready and the truth is best known, or at any other place where it shall be thought most convenient by your high discretion and authority.

The statutes of Provisors, commonly called Præmunire statutes, which forbade all purchases of bulls from Rome under penalty of outlawry, have been usually considered in the highest degree oppressive; and more particularly the public censure has fallen upon the last application of those statutes, when, on Wolsey's fall, the whole body of the clergy were laid under a præmunire, and only obtained pardon on payment of a serious fine. Let no one regret that he has learnt to be tolerant to Roman Catholics as the nineteenth century knows them. But it is a spurious charity which, to remedy a modern injustice, hastens to its opposite; and when philosophic historians indulge in loose invective against the statesmen of the Reformation, they show themselves unfit to be trusted with the custody of our national annals. The Acts of Parliament speak plainly of the enormous abuses which had

grown up under these bulls. Yet even the emphatic language of the statutes scarcely prepares us to find an abbot able to purchase with jewels stolen from his own convent a faculty to confer holy orders, though there is no evidence that he had been consecrated bishop, and to make a thousand pounds by selling the exercise of his privileges. This is the most flagrant case which has fallen under the eyes of the present writer. Yet it is but a choice specimen out of many. He was taught to believe, like other modern students of history, that the papal dispensations for immorality, of which we read in Foxe and other Protestant writers, were calumnies, but he has been forced against his will to perceive that the supposed calumnies were but the plain truth; he has found among the records—for one thing, a list of more than twenty clergy in one diocese who had obtained licences to keep concubines.[1] After some experience, he advises all persons who are anxious to understand the English Reformation to place implicit confidence in the Statute Book. Every fresh record which is brought to light is a fresh evidence in its favour. In the fluctuations of the conflict there were parliaments, as there were princes, of opposing sentiments; and measures were passed, amended, repealed, or censured, as Protestants and Catholics came alternately into power. But whatever were the differences of opinion, the facts on either side which are stated in an Act of Parliament may be uniformly trusted. Even

[1] Tanner MS. 105, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

in the attainders for treason and heresy we admire the truthfulness of the details of the indictments although we deplore the prejudice which at times could make a crime of virtue.

We pass on to the next picture. Equal justice, or some attempt at it, was promised, and we shall perhaps part from the friends of the monasteries on better terms than they believe. At least, we shall add to our own history and to the Catholic martyrology a story of genuine interest.

We have many accounts of the abbeys at the time of their actual dissolution. The resistance or acquiescence of superiors, the dismissals of the brethren, the sale of the property, the destruction of relics, &c., are all described. We know how the windows were taken out, how the glass appropriated, how the 'melter' accompanied the visitors to run the lead upon the roofs, and the metal of the bells, into portable forms. We see the pensioned regulars filing out reluctantly, or exulting in their deliverance, discharged from their vows, furnished each with his 'secular apparel,' and his purse of money, to begin the world as he might. These scenes have long been partially known, and they were rarely attended with anything remarkable. At the time of the suppression, the discipline of several years had broken down opposition, and prepared the way for the catastrophe. The end came at last, but as an issue which had been long foreseen.

We have sought in vain, however, for a glimpse into the interior of the houses at the first intimation of

what was coming—more especially when the great blow was struck which severed England from obedience to Rome, and asserted the independence of the Anglican Church. Then, virtually, the fate of the monasteries was decided. As soon as the supremacy was vested in the Crown, inquiry into their condition could no longer be escaped or delayed; and then, through the length and breadth of the country, there must have been rare dismay. The account of the London Carthusians is indeed known to us, because they chose to die rather than yield submission where their consciences forbade them; and their isolated heroism has served to distinguish their memories. The Pope, as head of the Universal Church, claimed the power of absolving subjects from their allegiance to their king. He deposed Henry. He called on foreign princes to enforce his sentence; and, on pain of excommunication, commanded the native English to rise in rebellion. The king, in self-defence, was compelled to require his subjects to disclaim all sympathy with these pretensions, and to recognize no higher authority, spiritual or secular, than himself within his own dominions. The regular clergy throughout the country were on the Pope's side, secretly or openly. The Charter-house monks, however, alone of all the order, had the courage to declare their convictions, and to suffer for them. Of the rest, we only perceive that they at last submitted; and since there was no uncertainty as to their real feelings, we have been disposed to judge them hardly as cowards. Yet we who have never been tried, should perhaps be

cautious in our censures. It is possible to hold an opinion quite honestly, and yet to hesitate about dying for it. We consider ourselves, at the present day, persuaded honestly of many things; yet which of them should we refuse to relinquish if the scaffold were the alternative—or at least seem to relinquish, under silent protest?

And yet, in the details of the struggle at the Charter-house, we see the forms of mental trial which must have repeated themselves among all bodies of the clergy wherever there was seriousness of conviction. If the majority of the monks were vicious and sensual, there was still a large minority labouring to be true to their vows; and when one entire convent was capable of sustained resistance, there must have been many where there was only just too little virtue for the emergency—where the conflict between interest and conscience was equally genuine, though it ended the other way. Scenes of bitter misery there must have been—of passionate emotion wrestling ineffectually with the iron resolution of the Government: and the faults of the Catholic party weigh so heavily against them in the course and progress of the Reformation, that we cannot willingly lose the few countervailing tints which soften the darkness of their conditions.

Nevertheless, for any authentic account of the abbeys at this crisis, we have hitherto been left to our imagination. A stern and busy administration had little leisure to preserve records of sentimental struggles which led to nothing. The Catholics did not care to

keep alive the recollection of a conflict in which, even though with difficulty, the Church was defeated. A rare accident only could have brought down to us any fragment of a transaction which no one had an interest in remembering. That such an accident has really occurred, we may consider as unusually fortunate. The story in question concerns the abbey of Woburn, and is as follows :—

At Woburn, as in many other religious houses, there were representatives of both the factions which divided the country ; perhaps we should say of three—the sincere Catholics, the Indifferentists, and the Protestants. These last, so long as Wolsey was in power, had been frightened into silence, and with difficulty had been able to save themselves from extreme penalties. No sooner, however, had Wolsey fallen, and the battle commenced with the Papacy, than the tables turned, the persecuted became persecutors—or at least threw off their disguise—and were strengthened with the support of the large class who cared only to keep on the winning side. The mysteries of the faith came to be disputed at the public tables ; the refectories rang with polemics ; the sacred silence of the dormitories was broken for the first time by lawless speculation. The orthodox might have appealed to the Government: heresy was still forbidden by law, and, if detected, was still punished by the stake. But the orthodox among the regular clergy adhered to the Pope as well as to the faith, and abhorred the sacrilege of the Parliament as deeply as the new opinions of the Reformers. Instead

of calling in the help of the law, they muttered treason in secret; and the Reformers, confident in the necessities of the times, sent reports to London of their arguments and conversations. The authorities in the abbey were accused of disaffection; and a commission of inquiry was sent down towards the end of the spring of 1536, to investigate. The depositions taken on this occasion are still preserved; and with the help of them, we can leap over three centuries of time, and hear the last echoes of the old monastic life in Woburn Abbey dying away in discord.

Where party feeling was running so high, there were, of course, passionate arguments. The Act of Supremacy, the spread of Protestantism, the power of the Pope, the state of England—all were discussed; and the possibilities of the future, as each party painted it in the colours of his hopes. The brethren, we find, spoke their minds in plain language, sometimes condescending to a joke.

Brother Sherbourne deposes that the sub-prior, 'on Candlemas-day last past (February 2, 1536), asked him whether he longed not to be at Rome where all his bulls were?' Brother Sherbourne answered that 'his bulls had made so many calves, that he had burned them. Whereunto the sub-prior said he thought there were more calves now than there were then.'

Then there were long and furious quarrels about 'my Lord Privy Seal' (Cromwell)—who was to one party, the incarnation of Satan; to the other, the delivering angel.

Nor did matters mend when from the minister they passed to the master.

Dan John Croxton being in 'the shaving-house' one day, with certain of the brethren having their tonsures looked to, and gossiping as men do on such occasions, one 'Friar Lawrence did say that the king was dead.' Then said Croxton, 'Thanks be to God, his Grace is in good health, and I pray God so continue him;' and said further to the said Lawrence, 'I advise thee to leave thy babbling.' Croxton, it seems, had been among the suspected in earlier times. Lawrence said to him, 'Croxton, it maketh no matter what thou sayest, for thou art one of the new world;' whereupon hotter still the conversation proceeded. 'Thy babbling tongue,' Croxton said, 'will turn us all to displeasure at length.' 'Then,' quoth Lawrence, 'neither thou nor yet any of us all shall do well as long as we forsake our head of the Church, the Pope.' 'By the mass!' quoth Croxton, 'I would thy Pope Roger were in thy belly, or thou in his, for thou art a false perjured knave to thy prince.' Whereunto the said Lawrence answered, saying, 'By the mass, thou liest! I was never sworn to forsake the Pope to be our head, and never will be.' 'Then,' quoth Croxton, 'thou shalt be sworn spite of thine heart one day, or I will know why nay.'

These and similar wranglings may be taken as specimens of the daily conversation at Woburn, and we can perceive how an abbot with the best intentions would have found it difficult to keep the peace. There

are instances of superiors in other houses throwing down their command in the midst of the crisis in flat despair, protesting that their subject brethren were no longer governable. Abbots who were inclined to the Reformation could not manage the Catholics; Catholic abbots could not manage the Protestants; indifferent abbots could not manage either the one or the other. It would have been well for the Abbot of Woburn—or well as far as this world is concerned—if he, like one of these, had acknowledged his incapacity, and had fled from his charge.

His name was Robert Hobbes. Of his age and family, history is silent. We know only that he held his place when the storm rose against the Pope; that, like the rest of the clergy, he bent before the blast, taking the oath to the king, and submitting to the royal supremacy, but swearing under protest, as the phrase went, with the outward, and not with the inward, man—in fact, perjuring himself. Though infirm, so far, however, he was too honest to be a successful counterfeit, and from the jealous eyes of the Neologians of the abbey he could not conceal his tendencies. We have significant evidence of the *espionage* which was established over all suspected quarters, in the conversations and trifling details of conduct on the part of the Abbot, which were reported to the Government.

In the summer of 1534, orders came that the Pope's name should be rased out wherever it was mentioned in the mass books. A malcontent, by name Robert

Salford, deposed that 'he was singing mass before the Abbot at St Thomas's altar within the monastery, at which time he rased out with his knife the said name out of the canon.' The Abbot told him to 'take a pen and strike or cross him out.' The saucy monk said those were not the orders. They were to rase him out. 'Well, well,' the Abbot said, 'it will come again one day.' 'Come again, will it?' was the answer; 'if it do, then we will put him in again; but I trust I shall never see that day.' The mild Abbot could remonstrate, but could not any more command; and the proofs of his malignant inclinations were remembered against him for the ear of Cromwell.

In the general injunctions, too, he was directed to preach against the Pope, and to expose his usurpation; but he could not bring himself to obey. He shrank from the pulpit; he preached but twice after the visitation, and then on other subjects, while in the prayer before the sermon he refused, as we find, to use the prescribed form. He only said, 'You shall pray for the spirituality, the temporality, and the souls that be in the pains of purgatory; and did not name the king to be supreme head of the Church in neither of the said sermons, nor speak against the pretended authority of the Bishop of Rome.'

Again, when Paul the Third, shortly after his election, proposed to call a general council at Mantua, against which, by advice of Henry the Eighth, the Germans protested, we have a glimpse how eagerly anxious English eyes were watching for a turning tide.

'Hear you,' said the Abbot one day, 'of the Pope's holiness and the congregation of bishops, abbots, and princes gathered to the council at Mantua? They be gathered for the reformation of the Universal Church; and here now we have a book of the excuse of the Germans, by which we may know what heretics they be: for if they were Catholics and true men as they pretend to be, they would never have refused to come to a general council.'

So matters went with the Abbot for some months after he had sworn obedience to the king. Lulling his conscience with such opiates as the casuists could provide for him, he watched anxiously for a change, and laboured with but little reserve to hold his brethren to their old allegiance.

In the summer of 1535, however, a change came over the scene, very different from the outward reaction for which he was looking, and a better mind woke in the Abbot: he learnt that in swearing what he did not mean with reservations and nice distinctions, he had lied to heaven and lied to man: that to save his miserable life he had perilled his soul. When the Oath of Supremacy was required of the nation, Sir Thomas More, Bishop Fisher, and the monks of the Charterhouse—mistaken, as we believe, in judgment, but true to their consciences, and disdaining evasion or subterfuge—chose, with deliberate nobleness, rather to die than to perjure themselves. This is no place to enter on the great question of the justice or necessity of those

executions; but the story of the so-called martyrdoms convulsed the Catholic world. The Pope shook upon his throne; the shuttle of diplomatic intrigue stood still; diplomatists who had lived so long in lies that the whole life of man seemed but a stage pageant, a thing of show and tinsel, stood aghast at the revelation of English sincerity, and a shudder of great awe ran through Europe. The fury of party leaves little room for generous emotion, and no pity was felt for these men by the English Protestants. The Protestants knew well that if these same sufferers could have had their way, they would themselves have been sacrificed by hecatombs; and as they had never experienced mercy, so they were in turn without mercy. But to the English Catholics, who believed as Fisher believed, but who had not dared to suffer as Fisher suffered, his death and the death of the rest acted as a glimpse of the Judgment Day. Their safety became their shame and terror; and in the radiant example before them of true faithfulness, they saw their own falsehood and their own disgrace. So it was with Father Forest, who had taught his penitents in confession that they might perjure themselves, and who now sought a cruel death in voluntary expiation; so it was with Whiting, the Abbot of Glastonbury; so with others whose names should be more familiar to us than they are; and here in Woburn we are to see the feeble but genuine penitence of Abbot Hobbes. He was still unequal to immediate martyrdom, but he did what he knew might

drag his death upon him if disclosed to the Government, and surrounded by spies he could have had no hope of concealment.

'At the time,' deposed Robert Salford, 'that the monks of the Charter-house, with other traitors, did suffer death, the Abbot did call us into the Chapter-house, and said these words:—"Brethren, this is a perilous time; such a scourge was never heard since Christ's passion. Ye hear how good men suffer the death. Brethren, this is undoubted for our offences. Ye read, so long as the children of Israel kept the commandments of God, so long their enemies had no power over them, but God took vengeance of their enemies. But when they broke God's commandments, then they were subdued by their enemies, and so be we. Therefore let us be sorry for our offences. Undoubted he will take vengeance of our enemies; I mean those heretics that causeth so many good men to suffer thus. Alas, it is a piteous case that so much Christian blood should be shed. Therefore, good brethren, for the reverence of God, every one of you devoutly pray, and say this Psalm, 'O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled, and made Jerusalem a heap of stones. The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat to the fowls of the air, and the flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the field. Their blood have they shed like water on every side of Jerusalem, and there was no man to bury them. We are become an open scorn unto our enemies, a very scorn and derision unto them that are round about us. Oh,

remember not our old sins, but have mercy upon us, and that soon, for we are come to great misery. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name. Oh, be merciful unto our sins for thy name's sake. Wherefore do the heathen say, 'Where is now their God?' Ye shall say this Psalm," repeated the Abbot, "every Friday, after the litany, prostrate, when ye lie upon the high altar, and undoubtedly God will cease this extreme scourge." And so,' continues Salford, significantly, 'the convent did say this aforesaid Psalm until there were certain that did murmur at the saying of it, and so it was left.'

The Abbot, it seems, either stood alone, or found but languid support: even his own familiar friends whom he trusted, those with whom he had walked in the house of God, had turned against him; the harsh air of the dawn of a new world choked him: what was there for him but to die? But his conscience still haunted him: while he lived he must fight on, and so, if possible, find pardon for his perjury. The blows in those years fell upon the Church thick and fast. In February, 1536, the Bill passed for the dissolution of the smaller monasteries; and now we find the sub-prior with the whole fraternity united in hostility, and the Abbot without one friend remaining.

'He did again call us together,' says the next deposition, 'and lamentably mourning for the dissolving the said houses, he enjoined us to sing "Salvator mundi, salva nos omnes," every day after lauds; and we murmured at it, and were not content to sing it for

such cause; and so we did omit it divers days, for which the Abbot came unto the Chapter, and did in manner rebuke us, and said we were bound to obey his commandment by our profession, and so did command us to sing it again with the versicle "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered. Let them also that hate Him flee before Him." Also he enjoined us at every mass that every priest did sing, to say the collect, "O God, who despisest not the sighing of a contrite heart." And he said if we did this with good and true devotion, God would so handle the matter, that it should be to the comfort of all England, and so show us mercy as he showed unto the children of Israel. And surely, brethren, there will come to us a good man that will rectify these monasteries again that be now suppresst, because "God can of these stones raise up children to Abraham."'

'Of the stones,' perhaps, but less easily of the stony-hearted monks, who, with pitiless smiles, watched the Abbot's sorrow, which should soon bring him to his ruin.

Time passed on, and as the world grew worse, so the Abbot grew more lonely. Desolate and unsupported, he was still unable to make up his mind to the course which he knew to be right; but he slowly strengthened himself for the trial, and as Lent came on the season brought with it a more special call to effort; he did not fail to recognize it. The conduct of the fraternity sorely disturbed him. They preached against all which he most loved and valued, in language purposely

coarse; and the mild sweetness of the rebukes which he administered, showed plainly on which side lay, in the Abbey of Woburn, the larger portion of the spirit of Heaven. Now, when the passions of those times have died away, and we can look back with more indifferent eyes, how touching is the following scene. There was one Sir William, curate of Woburn Chapel, whose tongue, it seems, was rough beyond the rest. The Abbot met him one day, and spoke to him. 'Sir William,' he said, 'I hear tell ye be a great railer. I marvel that ye rail so I pray you teach my cure the Scripture of God, and that may be to edification. I pray you leave such railing. Ye call the Pope a bear and a bandog. Either he is a good man or an ill. *Domino suo stat aut cadit.* The office of a bishop is honourable. What edifying is this to rail? Let him alone.'

But they would not let him alone, nor would they let the Abbot alone. He grew 'somewhat acrased,' they said; vexed with feelings of which they had no experience. He fell sick, sorrow and the Lent discipline weighing upon him. The brethren went to see him in his room; one Brother Dan Woburn came among the rest, and asked him how he did; the Abbot answered, 'I would that I had died with the good men that died for holding with the Pope. My conscience, my conscience doth grudge me every day for it.' Life was fast losing its value for him. What was life to him or any man when bought with a sin against his soul? 'If the Abbot be disposed to die, for that matter,'

Brother Croxton observed, 'he may die as soon as he will.'

All Lent he fasted and prayed, and his illness grew upon him; and at length in Passion week he thought all was over, and that he was going away. On Passion Sunday he called the brethren about him, and as they stood round his bed, with their cold, hard eyes, 'he exhorted them all to charity,' he implored them 'never to consent to go out of their monastery; and if it chanced them to be put from it, they should in no wise forsake their habit.' After these words, 'being in a great agony, he rose out of his bed, and cried out and said, "I would to God, it would please Him to take me out of this wretched world; and I would I had died with the good men that have suffered death heretofore, for they were quickly out of their pain."'[1] Then, half wandering, he began to mutter to himself aloud the thoughts which had been working in him in his struggles; and quoting St Bernard's words about the Pope, he exclaimed, 'Tu quis es primatu Abel, gubernatione Noah, auctoritate Moses, judicatu Samuel, potestate Petrus, unctione Christus. Aliæ ecclesiæ habent super se pastores. Tu pastor pastorum es.'

Let it be remembered that this is no sentimental fiction begotten out of the brain of some ingenious novelist, but the record of the true words and sufferings of a genuine child of Adam, labouring in a trial too hard for him.

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[1] Meaning, as he afterwards said, More and Fisher and the Carthusians.

He prayed to die, and in good time death was to come to him; but not, after all, in the sick bed, with his expiation but half completed. A year before, he had thrown down the cross when it was offered him. He was to take it again—the very cross which he had refused. He recovered. He was brought before the council; with what result, there are no means of knowing. To admit the Papal supremacy when officially questioned was high treason. Whether the Abbot was constant, and received some conditional pardon, or whether his heart again for the moment failed him—whichever he did, the records are silent. This only we ascertain of him: that he was not put to death under the Statute of Supremacy. But, two years later, when the official list was presented to the Parliament of those who had suffered for their share in 'the Pilgrimage of Grace,' among the rest we find the name of Robert Hobbes, late Abbot of Woburn. To this solitary fact we can add nothing. The rebellion was put down, and in the punishment of the offenders there was unusual leniency; not more than thirty persons were executed, although forty thousand had been in arms. Those only were selected who had been most signally implicated. But they were all leaders in the movement; the men of highest rank, and therefore greatest guilt. They died for what they believed their duty; and the king and council did their duty in enforcing the laws against armed insurgents. He for whose cause each supposed themselves to be contending, has long since judged between them; and both parties

perhaps now see all things with clearer eyes than was permitted to them on earth.

We also can see more distinctly. We will not refuse the Abbot Hobbes a brief record of his trial and passion. And although twelve generations of Russells —all loyal to the Protestant ascendancy—have swept Woburn clear of Catholic associations, they, too, in these later days, will not regret to see revived the authentic story of its last Abbot.

ENGLAND'S FORGOTTEN WORTHIES.[1]

THE Reformation, the Antipodes, the American Continent, the Planetary system, and the infinite deep of the Heavens, have now become common and familiar facts to us. Globes and orreries are the playthings of our school-days; we inhale the spirit of Protestantism with our earliest breath of consciousness. It is all but impossible to throw back our imagination into the time when, as new grand discoveries, they stirred every mind which they touched with awe and wonder at the revelation which God had sent down among mankind. Vast spiritual and material continents lay for the first time displayed, opening fields of thought and fields of enterprise of which none could conjecture the limit. Old routine was broken up. Men were thrown back on their own strength and their own power, unshackled to accomplish whatever they might dare. And although we do not speak of these

[1] *Westminster Review*, 1852.

discoveries as the cause of that enormous force of heart and intellect which accompanied them (for they were as much the effect as the cause, and one reacted on the other), yet at any rate they afforded scope and room for the play of powers which, without such scope, let them have been as transcendent as they would, must have passed away unproductive and blighted.

An earnest faith in the supernatural, an intensely real conviction of the divine and devilish forces by which the universe was guided and misguided, was the inheritance of the Elizabethan age from Catholic Christianity. The fiercest and most lawless men did then really and truly believe in the actual personal presence of God or the devil in every accident, or scene, or action. They brought to the contemplation of the new heaven and the new earth an imagination saturated with the spiritual convictions of the old era, which were not lost, but only infinitely expanded. The planets, whose vastness they now learnt to recognize, were, therefore, only the more powerful for evil or for good; the tides were the breathing of Demogorgon; and the idolatrous American tribes were real worshippers of the real devil, and were assisted with the full power of his evil army.

It is a form of thought which, however in a vague and general way we may continue to use its phraseology, has become, in its detailed application to life, utterly strange to us. We congratulate ourselves on the enlargement of our understanding when we read the decisions of grave law courts in cases of supposed

witchcraft: we smile complacently over Raleigh's story of the island of the Amazons, and rejoice that we are not such as he—entangled in the cobwebs of effete and foolish superstition. Yet the true conclusion is less flattering to our vanity. That Raleigh and Bacon could believe what they believed, and could be what they were notwithstanding, is to us a proof that the injury which such mistakes can inflict is unspeakably insignificant: and arising, as those mistakes arose, from a never-failing sense of the real awfulness and mystery of the world and of the life of human souls upon it, they witness to the presence in such minds of a spirit, the loss of which not the most perfect acquaintance with every law by which the whole creation moves can compensate. We wonder at the grandeur, the moral majesty of some of Shakespeare's characters, so far beyond what the noblest among ourselves can imitate, and at first thought we attribute it to the genius of the poet, who has outstripped nature in his creations. But we are misunderstanding the power and the meaning of poetry in attributing creativeness to it in any such sense. Shakespeare created, but only as the spirit of nature created around him, working in him as it worked abroad in those among whom he lived. The men whom he draws were such men as he saw and knew; the words they utter were such as he heard in the ordinary conversations in which he joined. At the Mermaid with Raleigh and with Sidney, and at a thousand unnamed English firesides, he found the living originals for his Prince Hals, his Orlandos, his

Antonios, his Portias, his Isabellas. The closer personal acquaintance which we can form with the English of the age of Elizabeth, the more we are satisfied that Shakespeare's great poetry is no more than the rhythmic echo of the life which it depicts.

It was, therefore, with no little interest that we heard of the formation of a society which was to employ itself, as we understood, in republishing in accessible form some, if not all, of the invaluable records compiled or composed by Richard Hakluyt. Books, like everything else, have their appointed death-day: the souls of them, unless they be found worthy of a second birth in a new body, perish with the paper in which they lived; and the early folio Hakluyts, not from their own want of merit, but from our neglect of them, were expiring of old age. The five-volume quarto edition, published in 1811, so little people then cared for the exploits of their ancestors, consisted but of 270 copies. It was intended for no more than for curious antiquaries, or for the great libraries, where it could be consulted as a book of reference; and among a people, the greater part of whom had never heard Hakluyt's name, the editors are scarcely to be blamed if it never so much as occurred to them that general readers would care to have the book within their reach.

And yet those five volumes may be called the Prose Epic of the modern English nation. They contain the heroic tales of the exploits of the great men in whom the new era was inaugurated; not mythic, like the Iliads and the Eddas, but plain broad narratives of

substantial facts, which rival legend in interest and grandeur. What the old epics were to the royally or nobly born, this modern epic is to the common people. We have no longer kings or princes for chief actors, to whom the heroism like the dominion of the world had in time past been confined. But, as it was in the days of the Apostles, when a few poor fishermen from an obscure lake in Palestine assumed, under the Divine mission, the spiritual authority over mankind, so, in the days of our own Elizabeth, the seamen from the banks of the Thames and the Avon, the Plym and the Dart, self-taught and self-directed, with no impulse but what was beating in their own royal hearts, went out across the unknown seas fighting, discovering, colonizing, and graved out the channels, paving them at last with their bones, through which the commerce and enterprise of England has flowed out over all the world. We can conceive nothing, not the songs of Homer himself, which would be read among us with more enthusiastic interest than these plain massive tales; and a people's edition of them in these days, when the writings of Ainsworth and Eugène Sue circulate in tens of thousands, would perhaps be the most blessed antidote which could be bestowed upon us. The heroes themselves were the men of the people—the Joneses, the Smiths, the Davises, the Drakes; and no courtly pen, with the one exception of Raleigh, lent its polish or its varnish to set them off. In most cases the captain himself, or his clerk or servant, or some unknown gentleman volunteer sat down and chronicled

the voyage which he had shared; and thus inorganically arose a collection of writings which, with all their simplicity, are for nothing more striking than for the high moral beauty, warmed with natural feeling, which displays itself through all their pages. With us, the sailor is scarcely himself beyond his quarter-deck. If he is distinguished in his profession, he is professional merely; or if he is more than that, he owes it not to his work as a sailor, but to independent domestic culture. With them, their profession was the school of their nature, a high moral education which most brought out what was most nobly human in them; and the wonders of earth, and air, and sea, and sky, were a real intelligible language in which they heard Almighty God speaking to them.

That such hopes of what might be accomplished by the Hakluyt Society should in some measure be disappointed, is only what might naturally be anticipated of all very sanguine expectation. Cheap editions are expensive editions to the publisher; and historical societies, from a necessity which appears to encumber all corporate English action, rarely fail to do their work expensively and infelicitously. Yet, after all allowances and deductions, we cannot reconcile ourselves to the mortification of having found but one volume in the series to be even tolerably edited, and that one to be edited by a gentleman to whom England is but an adopted country—Sir Robert Schomburgk. Raleigh's 'Conquest of Guiana,' with Sir Robert's sketch of Raleigh's history and character, form in everything but

its cost a very model of an excellent volume. For the remaining editors,[1] we are obliged to say that they have exerted themselves successfully to paralyze whatever interest was reviving in Hakluyt, and to consign their own volumes to the same obscurity to which time and accident were consigning the earlier editions. Very little which was really noteworthy escaped the industry of Hakluyt himself, and we looked to find reprints of the most remarkable of the stories which were to be found in his collection. The editors began unfortunately with proposing to continue the work where he had left it, and to produce narratives hitherto unpublished of other voyages of inferior interest, or not of English origin. Better thoughts appear to have occurred to them in the course of the work; but their evil destiny overtook them before their thoughts could get themselves executed. We opened one volume with eagerness, bearing the title of 'Voyages to the North-west,' in hope of finding our old friends Davis and Frobisher. We found a vast unnecessary Editor's Preface: and instead of the voyages themselves, which with their picturesqueness and moral beauty shine among the fairest jewels in the diamond mine of Hakluyt, we encountered an analysis and digest of their results, which Milton was called in to justify in an inappropriate quotation. It is much as if they had undertaken to edit 'Bacon's Essays,' and had retailed what they conceived to be the substance of them in their own language;

[1] This essay was written 15 years ago.

strangely failing to see that the real value of the actions or the thoughts of remarkable men does not lie in the material result which can be gathered from them, but in the heart and soul of the actors or speakers themselves. Consider what Homer's 'Odyssey' would be, reduced into an analysis.

The editor of the 'Letters of Columbus' apologizes for the rudeness of the old seaman's phraseology. Columbus, he tells us, was not so great a master of the pen as of the art of navigation. We are to make excuses for him. We are put on our guard, and warned not to be offended, before we are introduced to the sublime record of sufferings under which a man of the highest order was staggering towards the end of his earthly calamities; although the inarticulate fragments in which his thought breaks out from him, are strokes of natural art by the side of which literary pathos is poor and meaningless.

And even in the subjects which they select they are pursued by the same curious fatality. Why is Drake to be best known, or to be only known, in his last voyage? Why pass over the success, and endeavour to immortalize the failure? When Drake climbed the tree in Panamá, and saw both oceans, and vowed that he would sail a ship in the Pacific; when he crawled out upon the cliffs of Terra del Fuego, and leaned his head over the southernmost angle of the world; when he scored a furrow round the globe with his keel, and received the homage of the barbarians of the antipodes in the name of the Virgin Queen, he was another man

from what he had become after twenty years of court life and intrigue, and Spanish fighting and gold-hunting. There is a tragic solemnity in his end, if we take it as the last act of his career; but it is his life, not his death, which we desire—not what he failed to do, but what he did.

But every bad has a worse below it, and more offensive than all these is the editor of Hawkins's 'Voyage to the South Sea.' The narrative is striking in itself; not one of the best, but very good; and, as it is republished complete, we can fortunately read it through, carefully shutting off Captain Bethune's notes with one hand, and we shall then find in it the same beauty which breathes in the tone of all the writings of the period.

It is a record of misfortune, but of misfortune which did no dishonour to him who sunk under it; and there is a melancholy dignity in the style in which Hawkins tells his story, which seems to say, that though he had been defeated, and had never again an opportunity of winning back his lost laurels, he respects himself still for the heart with which he endured a shame which would have broken a smaller man. It would have required no large exertion of editorial self-denial to have abstained from marring the pages with puns of which 'Punch' would be ashamed, and with the vulgar affectation of patronage with which the sea captain of the nineteenth century condescends to criticize and approve of his half-barbarous precursor. And what excuse can we find for such an offence as this which

follows?—The war of freedom of the Araucan Indians is the most gallant episode in the history of the New World. The Spaniards themselves were not behindhand in acknowledging the chivalry before which they quailed, and after many years of ineffectual efforts, they gave up a conflict which they never afterwards resumed; leaving the Araucans alone, of all the American races with which they came in contact, a liberty which they were unable to tear from them. It is a subject for an epic poem; and whatever admiration is due to the heroism of a brave people whom no inequality of strength could appal and no defeats could crush, these poor Indians have a right to demand of us. The story of the war was well known in Europe: Hawkins, in coasting the western shores of South America, fell in with them, and the finest passage in his book is the relation of one of the incidents of the war:—

An Indian captain was taken prisoner by the Spaniards, and for that he was of name, and known to have done his devoir against them, they cut off his hands, thereby intending to disenable him to fight any more against them. But he, returning home, desirous to revenge this injury, to maintain his liberty, with the reputation of his nation, and to help to banish the Spaniard, with his tongue intreated and incited them to persevere in their accustomed valour and reputation, abasing the enemy and advancing his nation; condemning their contraries of cowardliness, and confirming it by the cruelty used with him and other his companions in their mishaps; showing them his arms without hands, and naming his brethren whose half feet they had cut off, because they might be unable to sit on horseback; with force arguing that if they feared them not, they would not have used so great inhumanity—for fear produceth cruelty, the companion of cowardice. Thus encouraged he them to fight for their lives, limbs, and liberty, choosing rather to die an honourable death fighting, than to live in servitude as fruitless

members of the commonwealth. Thus using the office of a sergeant-major, and having loaden his two stumps with bundles of arrows, he succoured them who, in the succeeding battle, had their store wasted; and changing himself from place to place, animated and encouraged his countrymen with such comfortable persuasions, as it is reported and credibly believed, that he did more good with his words and presence, without striking a stroke, than a great part of the army did with fighting to the utmost.

It is an action which may take its place by the side of the myth of Mucius Scævola, or the real exploit of that brother of the poet Æschylus, who, when the Persians were flying from Marathon, clung to a ship till both his hands were hewn away, and then seized it with his teeth, leaving his name as a portent even in the splendid calendar of Athenian heroes. Captain Bethune, without call or need, making his notes, merely, as he tells us, from the suggestions of his own mind as he revised the proof-sheets, informs us, at the bottom of the page, that 'it reminds him of the familiar lines—

For Widdrington I needs must wail,
As one in doleful dumps;
For when his legs were smitten off,
He fought upon his stumps.

It must not avail him, that he has but quoted from the ballad of Chevy Chase. It is the most deformed stanza[1]

[1] Here is the old stanza. Let whoever is disposed to think us too hard on Captain Bethune compare them:—

'For Wetharrington my harte was woe,
That even he slayne sholde be;
For when both his leggis were hewen in to,
He knyled and fought on his knee.'

Even Percy, who, on the whole, thinks well of the modern ballad, gives up this stanza as hopeless.

of the modern deformed version which was composed in the eclipse of heart and taste, on the restoration of the Stuarts; and if such verses could then pass for serious poetry, they have ceased to sound in any ear as other than a burlesque; the associations which they arouse are only absurd, and they could only have continued to ring in his memory through their ludicrous doggrel.

When to these offences of the Society we add, that in the long laboured appendices and introductions, which fill up valuable space, which increase the expense of the edition, and into reading which many readers are, no doubt, betrayed, we have found nothing which assists the understanding of the stories which they are supposed to illustrate—when we have declared that we have found what is most uncommon passed without notice, and what is most trite and familiar encumbered with comment—we have unpacked our hearts of the bitterness which these volumes have aroused in us, and can now take our leave of them and go on with our more grateful subject.

Elizabeth, whose despotism was as peremptory as that of the Plantagenets, and whose ideas of the English constitution were limited in the highest degree, was, notwithstanding, more beloved by her subjects than any sovereign before or since. It was because, substantially, she was the people's sovereign; because it was given to her to conduct the outgrowth of the national life through its crisis of change, and the weight of her great mind and her great place were

thrown on the people's side. She was able to paralyze the dying efforts with which, if a Stuart had been on the throne, the representatives of an effete system might have made the struggle a deadly one; and the history of England is not the history of France, because the resolution of one person held the Reformation firm till it had rooted itself in the heart of the nation, and could not be again overthrown. The Catholic faith was no longer able to furnish standing ground on which the English or any other nation could live a manly and a godly life. Feudalism, as a social organization, was not any more a system under which their energies could have scope to move. Thenceforward, not the Catholic Church, but any man to whom God had given a heart to feel and a voice to speak, was to be the teacher to whom men were to listen; and great actions were not to remain the privilege of the families of the Norman nobles, but were to be laid within the reach of the poorest plebeian who had the stuff in him to perform them. Alone, of all the sovereigns in Europe, Elizabeth saw the change which had passed over the world. She saw it, and saw it in faith, and accepted it. The England of the Catholic Hierarchy and the Norman Baron, was to cast its shell and to become the England of free thought and commerce and manufacture, which was to plough the ocean with its navies, and sow its colonies over the globe; and the first appearance of these enormous forces and the light of the earliest achievements of the new era shines through the forty years of the reign of Elizabeth with

a grandeur which, when once its history is written, will be seen to be among the most sublime phenomena which the earth as yet has witnessed. The work was not of her creation; the heart of the whole English nation was stirred to its depths; and Elizabeth's place was to recognize, to love, to foster, and to guide. The Government originated nothing; at such a time it was neither necessary nor desirable that it should do so; but wherever expensive enterprises were on foot which promised ultimate good, and doubtful immediate profit, we never fail to find among the lists of contributors the Queen's Majesty, Burghley, Leicester, Walsingham. Never chary of her presence, for Elizabeth could afford to condescend, when ships were fitting in the river for distant voyages, the Queen would go down in her barge and inspect. Frobisher, who was but a poor sailor adventurer, sees her wave her handkerchief to him from the Greenwich Palace windows, and he brings her home a narwhal's horn for a present. She honoured her people, and her people loved her; and the result was that, with no cost to the Government, she saw them scattering the fleets of the Spaniards, planting America with colonies, and exploring the most distant seas. Either for honour or for expectation of profit, or from that unconscious necessity by which a great people, like a great man, will do what is right, and must do it at the right time, whoever had the means to furnish a ship, and whoever had the talent to command one, laid their abilities together and went out to pioneer, and to conquer, and to take possession, in the name of the

Queen of the Sea. There was no nation so remote but what some one or other was found ready to undertake an expedition there, in the hope of opening a trade; and, let them go where they would, they were sure of Elizabeth's countenance. We find letters written by her, for the benefit of nameless adventurers, to every potentate of whom she had ever heard—to the Emperors of China, Japan, and India, the Grand Duke of Russia, the Grand Turk, the Persian 'Sofee,' and other unheard-of Asiatic and African princes; whatever was to be done in England, or by Englishmen, Elizabeth assisted when she could, and admired when she could not.

The springs of great actions are always difficult to analyze—impossible to analyze perfectly—possible to analyze only very proximately; and the force by which a man throws a good action out of himself is invisible and mystical, like that which brings out the blossom and the fruit upon the tree. The motives which we find men urging for their enterprises seem often insufficient to have prompted them to so large a daring. They did what they did from the great unrest in them which made them do it, and what it was may be best measured by the results in the present England and America.

Nevertheless there was enough in the state of the world, and in the position of England, to have furnished abundance of conscious motive, and to have stirred the drowsiest minister of routine.

Among material occasions for exertion, the popu-

lation began to outgrow the employment, and there was a necessity for plantations to serve as an outlet. Men who, under happier circumstances, might have led decent lives, and done good service, were now driven by want to desperate courses—'witness,' as Richard Hakluyt says, 'twenty tall fellows hanged last Rochester assizes for small robberies;' and there is an admirable paper addressed to the Privy Council by Christopher Carlile, Walsingham's son-in-law, pointing out the possible openings to be made in or through such plantations for home produce and manufacture.

Far below all such prudential economies and mercantile ambitions, however, lay a chivalrous enthusiasm which in these dull days we can hardly, without an effort, realize. The life-and-death wrestle between the Reformation and the old religion had settled in the last quarter of the sixteenth century into a permanent struggle between England and Spain. France was disabled. All the help which Elizabeth could spare barely enabled the Netherlands to defend themselves. Protestantism, if it conquered, must conquer on another field; and by the circumstances of the time the championship of the Reformed faith fell to the English sailors. The sword of Spain was forged in the gold-mines of Peru; the legions of Alva were only to be disarmed by intercepting the gold ships on their passage; and, inspired by an enthusiasm like that which four centuries before had precipitated the chivalry of Europe upon the East, the same spirit which in its

present degeneracy covers our bays and rivers with pleasure yachts, then fitted out armed privateers, to sweep the Atlantic, and plunder and destroy Spanish ships wherever they could meet them.

Thus, from a combination of causes, the whole force and energy of the age was directed towards the sea. The wide excitement, and the greatness of the interests at stake, raised even common men above themselves; and people who in ordinary times would have been no more than mere seamen, or mere money-making merchants, appear before us with a largeness and greatness of heart and mind in which their duties to God and their country are alike clearly and broadly seen and felt to be paramount to every other.

Ordinary English traders we find fighting Spanish war ships in behalf of the Protestant faith. The cruisers of the Spanish main were full of generous eagerness for the conversion of the savage nations to Christianity. And what is even more surprising, sites for colonization were examined and scrutinized by such men in a lofty statesmanlike spirit, and a ready insight was displayed by them into the indirect effects of a wisely-extended commerce on every highest human interest.

Again, in the conflict with the Spaniards, there was a further feeling, a feeling of genuine chivalry, which was spurring on the English, and one which must be well understood and well remembered, if men like Drake, and Hawkins, and Raleigh are to be tolerably understood. One of the English Reviews, a short time

ago, was much amused with a story of Drake having excommunicated a petty officer as a punishment for some moral offence; the reviewer not being able to see in Drake, as a man, anything more than a highly brave and successful buccaneer, whose pretences to religion might rank with the devotion of an Italian bandit to the Madonna. And so Hawkins, and even Raleigh, are regarded by superficial persons, who see only such outward circumstances of their history as correspond with their own impressions. The high nature of these men, and the high objects which they pursued, will only rise out and become visible to us as we can throw ourselves back into their times and teach our hearts to feel as they felt. We do not find in the language of the voyagers themselves, or of those who lent them their help at home, any of that weak watery talk of 'protection of aborigines,' which, as soon as it is translated into fact, becomes the most active policy for their destruction, soul and body. But the stories of the dealings of the Spaniards with the conquered Indians, which were widely known in England, seem to have affected all classes of people, not with pious passive horror, but with a genuine human indignation. A thousand anecdotes in detail we find scattered up and down the pages of Hakluyt, who, with a view to make them known, translated Peter Martyr's letters; and each commonest sailor-boy who had heard these stories from his childhood among the tales of his father's fireside, had longed to be a man, that he might go out and become the avenger of a gallant and suffering people.

A high mission, undertaken with a generous heart, seldom fails to make those worthy of it to whom it is given; and it was a point of honour, if of nothing more, among the English sailors, to do no discredit by their conduct to the greatness of their cause. The high courtesy, the chivalry of the Spanish nobles, so conspicuous in their dealings with their European rivals, either failed to touch them in their dealings with uncultivated idolaters, or the high temper of the aristocracy was unable to restrain or to influence the masses of the soldiers. It would be as ungenerous as it would be untrue, to charge upon their religion the grievous actions of men who called themselves the armed missionaries of Catholicism, when the Catholic priests and bishops were the loudest in the indignation with which they denounced them. But we are obliged to charge upon it that slow and subtle influence so inevitably exercised by any religion which is divorced from life, and converted into a thing of form, or creed, or ceremony, or system—which could permit the same men to be extravagant in a sincere devotion to the Queen of Heaven, whose entire lower nature, unsubdued and unaffected, was given up to thirst of gold, and plunder, and sensuality. If religion does not make men more humane than they would be without it, it makes them fatally less so; and it is to be feared that the spirit of the Pilgrim Fathers, which had oscillated to the other extreme, and had again crystallized into a formal antinomian fanaticism, reproduced the same fatal results as those in which the Spaniards had set them their

unworthy precedent. But the Elizabethan navigators, full for the most part with large kindness, wisdom, gentleness, and beauty, bear names untainted, as far as we know, with a single crime against the savages of America; and the name of England was as famous in the Indian seas as that of Spain was infamous. On the banks of the Oronoko there was remembered for a hundred years the noble captain who had come there from the great Queen beyond the seas; and Raleigh speaks the language of the heart of his country, when he urges the English statesmen to colonize Guiana, and exults in the glorious hope of driving the white marauder into the Pacific, and restoring the Incas to the throne of Peru.

Who will not be persuaded (he says) that now at length the great Judge of the world hath heard the sighs, groans, and lamentations, hath seen the tears and blood of so many millions of innocent men, women, and children, afflicted, robbed, reviled, branded with hot irons, roasted, dismembered, mangled, stabbed, whipped, racked, scalded with hot oil, put to the strapado, ripped alive, beheaded in sport, drowned, dashed against the rocks, famished, devoured by mastiffs, burned, and by infinite cruelties consumed, and purposeth to scourge and plague that cursed nation, and to take the yoke of servitude from that distressed people, as free by nature as any Christian?

Poor Raleigh! if peace and comfort in this world were of much importance to him, it was in an ill day that he provoked the revenge of Spain. The strength of England was needed at the moment at its own door; the Armada came, and there was no means of executing such an enterprise. And afterwards the throne of Elizabeth was filled by a Stuart, and Guiana was to be

no scene of glory for Raleigh; rather, as later historians are pleased to think, it was the grave of his reputation.

But the hope burned clear in him through all the weary years of unjust imprisonment; and when he was a grey-headed old man, the base son of a bad mother used it to betray him. The success of his last enterprise was made the condition under which he was to be pardoned for a crime which he had not committed; and its success depended, as he knew, on its being kept secret from the Spaniards. James required of Raleigh on his allegiance a detail of what he proposed, giving him at the same time his word as a king that the secret should be safe with him. The next day it was sweeping out of the port of London in the swiftest of the Spanish ships, with private orders to the Governor of St Thomas to provoke a collision when Raleigh should arrive there, which should afterwards cost him his heart's blood.

We modern readers may run rapidly over the series of epithets under which Raleigh has catalogued the Indian sufferings, hoping that they are exaggerated, seeing that they are horrible, and closing our eyes against them with swiftest haste; but it was not so when every epithet suggested a hundred familiar facts; and some of these (not resting on English prejudice, but on sad Spanish evidence, which is too full of shame and sorrow to be suspected) shall be given in this place, however old a story it may be thought; because, as we said above, it is impossible to understand the actions of

these men, unless we are familiar with the feelings of which their hearts were full.

The massacres under Cortez and Pizarro, terrible as they were, were not the occasion which stirred the deepest indignation. They had the excuse of what might be called, for want of a better word, necessity, and of the desperate position of small bands of men in the midst of enemies who might be counted by millions. And in De Soto, when he burnt his guides in Florida (it was his practice, when there was danger of treachery, that those who were left alive might take warning); or in Vasco Nunnez, praying to the Virgin on the mountains of Darien, and going down from off them into the valleys to hunt the Indian caciques, and fling them alive to his bloodhounds; there was, at least, with all this fierceness and cruelty, a desperate courage which we cannot refuse to admire, and which mingles with and corrects our horror. It is the refinement of the Spaniard's cruelty in the settled and conquered provinces, excused by no danger and provoked by no resistance, the details of which witness to the infernal coolness with which it was perpetrated; and the great bearing of the Indians themselves under an oppression which they despaired of resisting, raises the whole history to the rank of a world-wide tragedy, in which the nobler but weaker nature was crushed under a malignant force which was stronger and yet meaner than itself. Gold hunting and lust were the two passions for which the Spaniards cared; and the fate of the Indian women was only more dreadful than that of

the men, who were ganged and chained to a labour in the mines which was only to cease with their lives, in a land where but a little before they had lived a free contented people, more innocent of crime than perhaps any people upon earth. If we can conceive what our own feelings would be—if, in the 'development of the mammalia,' some baser but more powerful race than man were to appear upon this planet, and we and our wives and children at our own happy firesides were degraded from our freedom, and became to them what the lower animals are to us, we can perhaps realize the feelings of the enslaved nations of Hispaniola.

As a harsh justification of slavery, it is sometimes urged that men who do not deserve to be slaves will prefer death to the endurance of it; and that if they prize their liberty, it is always in their power to assert it in the old Roman fashion. Tried even by so hard a rule, the Indians vindicated their right; and, before the close of the sixteenth century, the entire group of the Western Islands in the hands of the Spaniards, containing, when Columbus discovered them, many millions of inhabitants, were left literally desolate from suicide. Of the anecdotes of this terrible self-immolation, as they were then known in England, here are a few out of many.

The first is simple, and a specimen of the ordinary method. A Yucatan cacique, who was forced with his old subjects to labour in the mines, at last 'calling those miners into an house, to the number of ninety-five, he thus debateth with them:'—

'My worthy companions and friends, why desire we to live any longer under so cruel a servitude? Let us now go unto the perpetual seat of our ancestors, for we shall there have rest from these intolerable cares and grievances which we endure under the subjection of the unthankful. Go ye before, I will presently follow you.' Having so spoken, he held out whole handfuls of those leaves which take away life, prepared for the purpose, and giving every one part thereof, being kindled to suck up the fume; who obeyed his command, the king and his chief kinsmen reserving the last place for themselves.

We speak of the crime of suicide, but few persons will see a crime in this sad and stately leave-taking of a life which it was no longer possible to bear with unbroken hearts. We do not envy the Indian who, with Spaniards before him as an evidence of the fruits which their creed brought forth, deliberately exchanged for it the old religion of his country, which could sustain him in an action of such melancholy grandeur. But the Indians did not always reply to their oppressors with escaping passively beyond their hands. Here is a story with matter in it for as rich a tragedy as Œdipus or Agamemnon; and in its stern and tremendous features, more nearly resembling them than any which were conceived even by Shakespeare.

An officer named Orlando had taken the daughter of a Cuban cacique to be his mistress. She was with child by him, but, suspecting her of being engaged in some other intrigue, he had her fastened to two wooden spits, not intending to kill her, but to terrify her; and setting her before the fire, he ordered that she should be turned by the servants of the kitchen.

The maiden, stricken with fear through the cruelty thereof, and

strange kind of torment, presently gave up the ghost. The cacique, her father, understanding the matter, took thirty of his men and went to the house of the captain, who was then absent, and slew his wife, whom he had married after that wicked act committed, and the women who were companions of the wife, and her servants every one. Then shutting the door of the house, and putting fire under it, he burnt himself and all his companions that assisted him, together with the captain's dead family and goods.

This is no fiction or poet's romance. It is a tale of wrath and revenge, which in sober dreadful truth enacted itself upon this earth, and remains among the eternal records of the doings of mankind upon it. As some relief to its most terrible features, we follow it with a story which has a touch in it of diabolical humour.

The slave-owners finding their slaves escaping thus unprosperously out of their grasp, set themselves to find a remedy for so desperate a disease, and were swift to avail themselves of any weakness, mental or bodily, through which to retain them in life. One of these proprietors being informed that a number of his people intended to kill themselves on a certain day, at a particular spot, and knowing by experience that they were too likely to do it, presented himself there at the time which had been fixed upon, and telling the Indians when they arrived that he knew their intention, and that it was vain for them to attempt to keep anything a secret from him, he ended with saying, that he had come there to kill himself with them; that as he had used them ill in this world, he might use them worse in the next; 'with which he did dissuade them presently from their purpose.' With what efficacy such

believers in the immortality of the soul were likely to recommend either their faith or their God; rather, how terribly all the devotion and all the earnestness with which the poor priests who followed in the wake of the conquerors laboured to recommend it were shamed and paralyzed, they themselves too bitterly lament.

It was idle to send out governor after governor with orders to stay such practices. They had but to arrive on the scene to become infected with the same fever; or if any remnant of Castilian honour, or any faintest echoes of the faith which they professed, still flickered in a few of the best and noblest, they could but look on with folded hands in ineffectual mourning; they could do nothing without soldiers, and the soldiers were the worst offenders. Hispaniola became a desert; the gold was in the mines, and there were no slaves left remaining to extract it. One means which the Spaniards dared to employ to supply the vacancy, brought about an incident which in its piteous pathos exceeds any story we have ever heard. Crimes and criminals are swept away by time, nature finds an antidote for their poison, and they and their ill consequences alike are blotted out and perish. If we do not forgive the villain at least we cease to hate him, as it grows more clear to us that he injures none so deeply as himself. But the θηριώδης κακία, the enormous wickedness by which humanity itself has been outraged and disgraced, we cannot forgive; we cannot cease to hate that; the years roll away, but the tints of it remain on the pages of history,

deep and horrible as the day on which they were entered there.

"When the Spaniards understood the simple opinion of the Yucatan islanders concerning the souls of their departed, which, after their sins purged in the cold northern mountains should pass into the south, to the intent that, leaving their own country of their own accord, they might suffer themselves to be brought to Hispaniola, they did persuade those poor wretches, that they came from those places where they should see their parents and children, and all their kindred and friends that were dead, and should enjoy all kinds of delights with the embracements and fruition of all beloved beings. And they, being infected and possessed with these crafty and subtle imaginations, singing and rejoicing left their country, and followed vain and idle hope. But when they saw that they were deceived, and neither met their parents nor any that they desired, but were compelled to undergo grievous sovereignty and command, and to endure cruel and extreme labour, they either slew themselves, or, choosing to famish, gave up their fair spirits, being persuaded by no reason or violence to take food. So these miserable Yucatans came to their end.

It was once more as it was in the days of the Apostles. The New World was first offered to the holders of the old traditions. They were the husbandmen first chosen for the new vineyard, and blood and desolation were the only fruits which they reared upon it. In their hands it was becoming a kingdom, not of God, but of the devil, and a sentence of blight went out against them and against their works. How fatally it has worked, let modern Spain and Spanish America bear witness. We need not follow further the history of their dealings with the Indians. For their colonies, a fatality appears to have followed all attempts at Catholic colonization. Like shoots from an old decaying tree which no skill and no care can rear, they were

planted, and for a while they might seem to grow; but their life was never more than a lingering death, a failure, which to a thinking person would outweigh in the arguments against Catholicism whole libraries of faultless *catenas*, and a *consensus patrum* unbroken through fifteen centuries for the supremacy of St Peter.

There is no occasion to look for superstitious causes to explain the phenomenon. The Catholic faith had ceased to be the faith of the large mass of earnest thinking capable persons; and to those who can best do the work, all work in this world sooner or later is committed. America was the natural home for Protestants; persecuted at home, they sought a place where they might worship God in their own way, without danger of stake or gibbet, and the French Huguenots, as afterwards the English Puritans, early found their way there. The fate of a party of Coligny's people, who had gone out as settlers, shall be the last of these stories, illustrating, as it does in the highest degree, the wrath and fury with which the passions on both sides were boiling. A certain John Ribault, with about 400 companions, had emigrated to Florida. They were quiet inoffensive people, and lived in peace there several years, cultivating the soil, building villages, and on the best possible terms with the natives. Spain was at the time at peace with France; we are, therefore, to suppose that it was in pursuance of the great crusade, in which they might feel secure of the secret, if not the confessed, sympathy of the Guises, that a powerful Spanish fleet bore down upon this settlement.

The French made no resistance, and they were seized and flayed alive, and their bodies hung out upon the trees, with an inscription suspended over them, 'Not as Frenchmen, but as heretics.' At Paris all was sweetness and silence. The settlement was tranquilly surrendered to the same men who had made it the scene of their atrocity; and two years later, 500 of the very Spaniards who had been most active in the murder were living there in peaceable possession, in two forts which their relation with the natives had obliged them to build. It was well that there were other Frenchmen living, of whose consciences the Court had not the keeping, and who were able on emergencies to do what was right without consulting it. A certain privateer, named Dominique de Gourges, secretly armed and equipped a vessel at Rochelle, and stealing across the Atlantic and in two days collecting a strong party of Indians, he came down suddenly upon the forts, and, taking them by storm, slew or afterwards hanged every man he found there, leaving their bodies on the trees on which they had hanged the Huguenots, with their own inscription reversed against them, — 'Not as Spaniards, but as murderers.' For which exploit, well deserving of all honest men's praise, Dominique de Gourges had to fly his country for his life; and, coming to England, was received with honourable welcome by Elizabeth.

It was at such a time, and to take their part amidst such scenes as these, that the English navigators appeared along the shores of South America, as the armed

soldiers of the Reformation, and as the avengers of humanity. As their enterprise was grand and lofty, so for the most part was the manner in which they bore themselves worthy of it. They were no nation of saints, in the modern sentimental sense of that word; they were prompt, stern men—more ready ever to strike an enemy than to parley with him; and, private adventurers as they all were, it was natural enough that private rapacity and private badness should be found among them as among other mortals. Every Englishman who had the means was at liberty to fit out a ship or ships, and if he could produce tolerable vouchers for himself, received at once a commission from the Court. The battles of England were fought by her children, at their own risk and cost, and they were at liberty to repay themselves the expense of their expeditions by plundering at the cost of the national enemy. Thus, of course, in a mixed world, there were found mixed marauding crews of scoundrels, who played the game which a century later was played with such effect by the pirates of the Tortugas. Negro hunters too, there were, and a bad black slave trade—in which Elizabeth herself, being hard driven for money, did not disdain to invest her capital—but on the whole, and in the war with the Spaniards, as in the war with the elements, the conduct and character of the English sailors, considering what they were and the work which they were sent to do, present us all through that age with such a picture of gallantry, disinterestedness, and high heroic energy, as has never been overmatched; the more re-

markable, as it was the fruit of no drill or discipline, no tradition, no system, no organized training, but was the free native growth of a noble virgin soil.

Before starting on an expedition, it was usual for the crew and the officers to meet and arrange among themselves a series of articles of conduct, to which they bound themselves by a formal agreement, the entire body itself undertaking to see to their observance. It is quite possible that strong religious profession, and even sincere profession, might be accompanied, as it was in the Spaniards, with everything most detestable. It is not sufficient of itself to prove that their actions would correspond with it, but it is one among a number of evidences; and coming as most of these men come before us, with hands clear of any blood but of fair and open enemies, their articles may pass at least as indications of what they were.

Here we have a few instances:—

Richard Hawkins's ship's company was, as he himself informs us, an unusually loose one. Nevertheless, we find them 'gathered together every morning and evening to serve God;' and a fire on board, which only Hawkins's presence of mind prevented from destroying ship and crew together, was made use of by the men as an occasion to banish swearing out of the ship.

With a general consent of all our company, it was ordained that there should be a palmer or ferula which should be in the keeping of him who was taken with an oath; and that he who had the palmer should give to every one that he took swearing, a palmada with it and the ferula; and whosoever at the time of evening or morning prayer was found to have the palmer, should have three blows

given him by the captain or the master; and that he should still be bound to free himself by taking another, or else to run in danger of continuing the penalty, which being executed a few days, reformed the vice, so that in three days together was not one oath heard to be sworn.

The regulations for Luke Fox's voyage commenced thus:—

For as much as the good success and prosperity of every action doth consist in the due service and glorifying of God, knowing that not only our being and preservation, but the prosperity of all our actions and enterprises, do immediately depend on His Almighty goodness and mercy; it is provided—

First, that all the company, as well officers as others, shall duly repair every day twice at the call of the bell to hear public prayers to be read, such as are authorized by the Church, and that in a godly and devout manner, as good Christians ought.

Secondly, that no man shall swear by the name of God, or use any profane oath, or blaspheme His holy name.

To symptoms such as these, we cannot but assign a very different value when they are the spontaneous growth of common minds, unstimulated by sense of propriety or rules of the service, or other official influence lay or ecclesiastic, from what attaches to the somewhat similar ceremonials in which, among persons whose position is conspicuous, important enterprises are now and then inaugurated.

We have said as much as we intend to say of the treatment by the Spaniards of the Indian women. Sir Walter Raleigh is commonly represented by historians as rather defective, if he was remarkable at all, on the moral side of his character. Yet Raleigh can declare proudly, that all the time he was on the Oronoko, 'neither by force nor other means had any of his men

intercourse with any woman there;' and the narrator of the incidents of Raleigh's last voyage acquaints his correspondent 'with some particulars touching the government of the fleet, which, although other men in their voyages doubtless in some measure observed, yet in all the great volumes which have been written touching voyages, there is no precedent of so godly severe and martial government, which not only in itself is laudable and worthy of imitation, but is also fit to be written and engraven on every man's soul that coveteth to do honour to his country.'

Once more, the modern theory of Drake is, as we said above, that he was a gentleman-like pirate on a large scale, who is indebted for the place which he fills in history to the indistinct ideas of right and wrong prevailing in the unenlightened age in which he lived, and who therefore demands all the toleration of our own enlarged humanity to allow him to remain there. Let us see how the following incident can be made to coincide with this hypothesis:—

A few days after clearing the Channel on his first great voyage, he fell in with a small Spanish ship, which he took for a prize. He committed the care of it to a certain Mr Doughtie, a person much trusted by, and personally very dear to him, and this second vessel was to follow him as a tender.

In dangerous expeditions into unknown seas, a second smaller ship was often indispensable to success; but many finely intended enterprises were ruined by the cowardice of the officers to whom such ships were

entrusted; who shrank as danger thickened, and again and again took advantage of darkness or heavy weather to make sail for England and forsake their commander. Hawkins twice suffered in this way; so did Sir Humfrey Gilbert; and, although Drake's own kind feeling for his old friend has prevented him from leaving an exact account of his offence, we gather from the scattered hints which are let fall, that he, too, was meditating a similar piece of treason. However, it may or may not have been thus. But when at Port St Julien, 'our General,' says one of the crew,—

Began to inquire diligently of the actions of Mr Thomas Doughtie, and found them not to be such as he looked for, but tending rather to contention or mutiny, or some other disorder, whereby, without redresse, the success of the voyage might greatly have been hazarded. Whereupon the company was called together and made acquainted with the particulars of the cause, which were found, partly by Mr Doughtie's own confession, and partly by the evidence of the fact, to be true, which, when our General saw, although his private affection to Mr Doughtie (as he then, in the presence of us all, sacredly protested) was great, yet the care which he had of the state of the voyage, of the expectation of Her Majesty, and of the honour of his country, did more touch him, as indeed it ought, than the private respect of one man; so that the cause being thoroughly heard, and all things done in good order as near as might be to the course of our law in England, it was concluded that Mr Doughtie should receive punishment according to the quality of the offence. And he, seeing no remedy but patience for himself, desired before his death to receive the communion, which he did at the hands of Mr Fletcher, our minister, and our General himself accompanied him in that holy action, which, being done, and the place of execution made ready, he, having embraced our General, and taken leave of all the company, with prayers for the Queen's Majesty and our realm, in quiet sort laid his head to the block, where he ended his life. This being done, our General made divers speeches to the whole company, persuading

us to unity, obedience, love, and regard of our voyage, and for the better confirmation thereof, willed every man the next Sunday following to prepare himself to receive the communion, as Christian brethren and friends ought to do, which was done in very reverent sort, and so with good contentment every man went about his business.

The simple majesty of this anecdote can gain nothing from any comment which we might offer upon it. The crew of a common English ship organizing, of their own free motion, on that wild shore, a judgment hall more grand and awful than any most elaborate law court, is not to be reconciled with the pirate theory. Drake, it is true, appropriated and brought home a million and a half of Spanish treasure, while England and Spain were at peace. He took that treasure because for many years the officers of the Inquisition had made free at their pleasure with the lives and goods of English merchants and seamen. The king of Spain, when appealed to, had replied that he had no power over the Holy House; and it was necessary to make the king of Spain, or the Inquisition, or whoever were the parties responsible, feel that they could not play their pious pranks with impunity. When Drake seized the bullion at Panama, he sent word to the Viceroy that he should now learn to respect the properties of English subjects; and he added, that if four English sailors, who were prisoners in Mexico, were molested, he would execute 2,000 Spaniards and send the Viceroy their heads. Spain and England were at peace, but Popery and Protestantism were at war—deep, deadly, and irreconcileable.

Wherever we find them, they are still the same. In the courts of Japan or of China; fighting Spaniards in the Pacific, or prisoners among the Algerines; founding colonies which by-and-by were to grow into enormous Transatlantic republics, or exploring in crazy pinnaces the fierce latitudes of the Polar seas,—they are the same indomitable God-fearing men whose life was one great liturgy. 'The ice was strong, but God was stronger,' says one of Frobisher's men, after grinding a night and a day among the icebergs, not waiting for God to come down and split the ice for them, but toiling through the long hours, himself and the rest fending off the vessel with poles and planks, with death glaring at them out of the rocks. Icebergs were strong, Spaniards were strong, and storms, and corsairs, and rocks and reefs, which no chart had then noted—they were all strong; but God was stronger, and that was all which they cared to know.

Out of the vast number of illustrations it is difficult to make wise selections, but the attention floats loosely over generalities, and only individual instances can seize it and hold it fast. We shall attempt to bring our readers face to face with some of these men; not, of course, to write their biographies, but to sketch the details of a few scenes, in the hope that they may tempt those under whose eyes they may fall to look for themselves to complete the perfect figure.

Some two miles above the port of Dartmouth, once among the most important harbours in England, on a projecting angle of land which runs out into the river

at the head of one of its most beautiful reaches, there has stood for some centuries the Manor House of Greenaway. The water runs deep all the way to it from the sea, and the largest vessels may ride with safety within a stone's throw of the windows. In the latter half of the sixteenth century there must have met, in the hall of this mansion, a party as remarkable as could have been found anywhere in England. Humfrey and Adrian Gilbert, with their half-brother, Walter Raleigh, here, when little boys, played at sailors in the reaches of Long Stream; in the summer evenings doubtless rowing down with the tide to the port, and wondering at the quaint figure-heads and carved prows of the ships which thronged it; or climbing on board, and listening, with hearts beating, to the mariners' tales of the new earth beyond the sunset. And here in later life, matured men, whose boyish dreams had become heroic action, they used again to meet in the intervals of quiet, and the rock is shown underneath the house where Raleigh smoked the first tobacco. Another remarkable man, of whom we shall presently speak more closely, could not fail to have made a fourth at these meetings. A sailor boy of Sandwich, the adjoining parish, John Davis, showed early a genius which could not have escaped the eye of such neighbours, and in the atmosphere of Greenaway he learned to be as noble as the Gilberts, and as tender and delicate as Raleigh. Of this party, for the present we confine ourselves to the host and owner, Humfrey Gilbert, knighted afterwards by Elizabeth. Led by the scenes of his childhood to the sea and

to sea adventures, and afterwards, as his mind unfolded, to study his profession scientifically, we find him as soon as he was old enough to think for himself, or make others listen to him, 'amending the great errors of naval sea cards, whose common fault is to make the degree of longitude in every latitude of one common bigness;' inventing instruments for taking observations. studying the form of the earth, and convincing himself that there was a north-west passage, and studying the necessities of his country, and discovering the remedies for them in colonization and extended markets for home manufactures. Gilbert was examined before the Queen's Majesty and the Privy Council, and the record of his examination he has himself left to us in a paper which he afterwards drew up, and strange enough reading it is. The most admirable conclusions stand side by side with the wildest conjectures.

Homer and Aristotle are pressed into service to prove that the ocean runs round the three old continents, and that America therefore is necessarily an island. The Gulf Stream, which he had carefully observed, eked out by a theory of the *primum mobile,* is made to demonstrate a channel to the north, corresponding to Magellan's Straits in the south, Gilbert believing, in common with almost every one of his day, that these straits were the only opening into the Pacific, and the land to the south was unbroken to the Pole. He prophesies a market in the East for our manufactured linen and calicoes:—

The Easterns greatly prizing the same, as appeareth in Hester,

where the pomp is expressed of the great King of India, Ahasuerus, who matched the coloured clothes wherewith his houses and tents were apparelled, with gold and silver, as part of his greatest treasure.

These and other such arguments were the best analysis which Sir Humfrey had to offer of the spirit which he felt to be working in him. We may think what we please of them; but we can have but one thought of the great grand words with which the memorial concludes, and they alone would explain the love which Elizabeth bore him:—

Never, therefore, mislike with me for taking in hand any laudable and honest enterprise, for if through pleasure or idleness we purchase shame, the pleasure vanisheth, but the shame abideth for ever.

Give me leave, therefore, without offence, always to live and die in this mind: that he is not worthy to live at all that, for fear or danger of death, shunneth his country's service and his own honour, seeing that death is inevitable and the fame of virtue immortal, wherefore in this behalf *mutare vel timere sperno.*

Two voyages which he undertook at his own cost, which shattered his fortune, and failed, as they naturally might, since inefficient help or mutiny of subordinates, or other disorders, are inevitable conditions under which more or less great men must be content to see their great thoughts mutilated by the feebleness of their instruments, did not dishearten him, and in June 1583 a last fleet of five ships sailed from the port of Dartmouth, with commission from the Queen to discover and take possession from latitude 45° to 50° North—a voyage not a little noteworthy, there being planted in the course of it the first English colony west of the Atlantic. Elizabeth had a foreboding that she would never see

him again. She sent him a jewel as a last token of her favour, and she desired Raleigh to have his picture taken before he went.

The history of the voyage was written by a Mr Edward Hayes, of Dartmouth, one of the principal actors in it, and as a composition it is more remarkable for fine writing than any very commendable thought in the author. But Sir Humfrey's nature shines through the infirmity of his chronicler; and in the end, indeed, Mr Hayes himself is subdued into a better mind. He had lost money by the voyage, and we will hope his higher nature was only under a temporary eclipse. The fleet consisted (it is well to observe the ships and the size of them) of the 'Delight,' 120 tons; the barque 'Raleigh,' 200 tons (this ship deserted off the Land's End); the 'Golden Hinde' and the 'Swallow,' 40 tons each; and the 'Squirrel,' which was called the frigate, 10 tons. For the uninitiated in such matters, we may add, that if in a vessel the size of the last, a member of the Yacht Club would consider that he had earned a club-room immortality if he had ventured a run in the depth of summer from Cowes to the Channel Islands.

We were in all (says Mr Hayes) 260 men, among whom we had of every faculty good choice. Besides, for solace of our own people, and allurement of the savages, we were provided of music in good variety, not omitting the least toys, as morris dancers, hobby horses, and May-like conceits to delight the savage people.

The expedition reached Newfoundland without accident. St John's was taken possession of, and a colony left there; and Sir Humfrey then set out exploring along

the American coast to the south, he himself doing all the work in his little 10-ton cutter, the service being too dangerous for the larger vessels to venture on. One of these had remained at St John's. He was now accompanied only by the 'Delight' and the 'Golden Hinde,' and these two keeping as near the shore as they dared, he spent what remained of the summer examining every creek and bay, marking the soundings, taking the bearings of the possible harbours, and risking his life, as every hour he was obliged to risk it in such a service, in thus leading, as it were, the forlorn hope in the conquest of the New World. How dangerous it was we shall presently see. It was towards the end of August.

The evening was fair and pleasant, yet not without token of storm to ensue, and most part of this Wednesday night, like the swan that singeth before her death, they in the 'Delight' continued in sounding of drums and trumpets and fifes, also winding the cornets and hautboys, and in the end of their jollity left with the battell and ringing of doleful knells.

Two days after came the storm; the 'Delight' struck upon a bank, and went down in sight of the other vessels, which were unable to render her any help. Sir Humfrey's papers, among other things, were all lost in her; at the time considered by him an irreparable misfortune. But it was little matter, he was never to need them. The 'Golden Hinde' and the 'Squirrel' were now left alone of the five ships. The provisions were running short, and the summer season was closing. Both crews were on short allowance; and with much difficulty Sir Humfrey was prevailed upon

to be satisfied for the present with what he had done, and to lay off for England.

So upon Saturday, in the afternoon, the 31st of August, we changed our course, and returned back for England, at which very instant, even in winding about, there passed along between us and the land, which we now forsook, a very lion, to our seeming, in shape, hair, and colour; not swimming after the manner of a beast by moving of his feet, but rather sliding upon the water with his whole body, except his legs, in sight, neither yet diving under and again rising as the manner is of whales, porpoises, and other fish, but confidently showing himself without hiding, notwithstanding that we presented ourselves in open view and gesture to amaze him. Thus he passed along, turning his head to and fro, yawning and gaping wide, with ougly demonstration of long teeth and glaring eyes; and to bidde us farewell, coming right against the 'Hinde,' he sent forth a horrible voice, roaring and bellowing as doth a lion, which spectacle we all beheld so far as we were able to discern the same, as men prone to wonder at every strange thing. What opinion others had thereof, and chiefly the General himself, I forbear to deliver. But he took it for *Bonum Omen*, rejoicing that he was to war against such an enemy, if it were the devil.

We have no doubt that he did think it was the devil; men in those days believing really that evil was more than a principle or a necessary accident, and that in all their labour for God and for right, they must make their account to have to fight with the devil in his proper person. But if we are to call it superstition, and if this were no devil in the form of a roaring lion, but a mere great seal or sea-lion, it is a more innocent superstition to impersonate so real a power, and it requires a bolder heart to rise up against it and defy it in its living terror, than to sublimate it away into a philosophical principle, and to forget to battle with it in speculating on its origin and nature. But to follow

the brave Sir Humfrey, whose work of fighting with the devil was now over, and who was passing to his reward. The 2nd of September the General came on board the 'Golden Hinde' 'to make merry with us.' He greatly deplored the loss of his books and papers, but he was full of confidence from what he had seen, and talked with eagerness and warmth of the new expedition for the following spring. Apocryphal gold-mines still occupying the minds of Mr Hayes and others, they were persuaded that Sir Humfrey was keeping to himself some such discovery which he had secretly made, and they tried hard to extract it from him. They could make nothing, however, of his odd, ironical answers, and their sorrow at the catastrophe which followed is sadly blended with disappointment that such a secret should have perished. Sir Humfrey doubtless saw America with other eyes than theirs, and gold-mines richer than California in its huge rivers and savannahs.

Leaving the issue of this good hope (about the gold), (continues Mr Hayes), to God, who only knoweth the truth thereof, I will hasten to the end of this tragedy, which must be knit up in the person of our General, and as it was God's ordinance upon him, even so the vehement persuasion of his friends could nothing avail to divert him from his wilful resolution of going in his frigate; and when he was entreated by the captain, master, and others, his well-wishers in the 'Hinde,' not to venture, this was his answer—'I will not forsake my little company going homewards, with whom I have passed so many storms and perils.'

Two-thirds of the way home they met foul weather and terrible seas, 'breaking short and pyramid-wise.' Men who had all their lives 'occupied the sea' had

never seen it more outrageous. 'We had also upon our mainyard an apparition of a little fier by night, which seamen do call Castor and Pollux.'

Monday the ninth of September, in the afternoon, the frigate was near cast away oppressed by waves, but at that time recovered, and giving forth signs of joy, the General, sitting abaft with a book in his hand, cried unto us in the 'Hinde' so often as we did approach within hearing, 'We are as near to heaven by sea as by land,' reiterating the same speech, well beseeming a soldier resolute in Jesus Christ, and I can testify that he was. The same Monday night, about twelve of the clock, or not long after, the frigate being ahead of us in the 'Golden Hinde, suddenly her lights were out, whereof as it were in a moment we lost the sight; and withal our watch cried, 'The General was cast away,' which was too true.

Thus faithfully (concludes Mr Hayes, in some degree rising above himself) I have related this story, wherein some spark of the knight's virtues, though he be extinguished, may happily appear; he remaining resolute to a purpose honest and godly as was this, to discover, possess, and reduce unto the service of God and Christian piety, those remote and heathen countries of America. Such is the infinite bounty of God, who from every evil deriveth good, that fruit may grow in time of our travelling in these North-Western lands (as has it not grown?), and the crosses, turmoils, and afflictions, both in the preparation and execution of the voyage, did correct the intemperate humours which before we noted to be in this gentleman, and made unsavoury and less delightful his other manifold virtues.

Thus as he was refined and made nearer unto the image of God, so it pleased the Divine will to resume him unto Himself, whither both his and every other high and noble mind have always aspired.

Such was Sir Humfrey Gilbert; still in the prime of his years when the Atlantic swallowed him. Like the gleam of a landscape lit suddenly for a moment by the lightning, these few scenes flash down to us across the centuries: but what a life must that have been of

which this was the conclusion! We have glimpses of him a few years earlier, when he won his spurs in Ireland—won them by deeds which to us seem terrible in their ruthlessness, but which won the applause of Sir Henry Sidney as too high for praise or even reward. Chequered like all of us with lines of light and darkness, he was, nevertheless, one of a race which has ceased to be. We look round for them, and we can hardly believe that the same blood is flowing in our veins. Brave we may still be, and strong perhaps as they, but the high moral grace which made bravery and strength so beautiful is departed from us for ever.

Our space is sadly limited for historical portrait painting; but we must find room for another of that Greenaway party whose nature was as fine as that of Gilbert, and who intellectually was more largely gifted. The latter was drowned in 1583. In 1585 John Davis left Dartmouth on his first voyage into the Polar seas; and twice subsequently he went again, venturing in small ill-equipped vessels of thirty or forty tons into the most dangerous seas. These voyages were as remarkable for their success as for the daring with which they were accomplished, and Davis's epitaph is written on the map of the world, where his name still remains to commemorate his discoveries. Brave as he was, he is distinguished by a peculiar and exquisite sweetness of nature, which, from many little facts of his life, seems to have affected every one with whom he came in contact in a remarkable degree. We find men, for the love of Master Davis, leaving their fire

sides to sail with him, without other hope or motion; we find silver bullets cast to shoot him in a mutiny; the hard rude natures of the mutineers being awed by something in his carriage which was not like that of a common man. He has written the account of one of his northern voyages himself; one of those, by-the-by, which the Hakluyt Society have mutilated; and there is an imaginative beauty in it, and a rich delicacy of expression, which is called out in him by the first sight of strange lands and things and people.

To show what he was, we should have preferred, if possible, to have taken the story of his expedition into the South Seas, in which, under circumstances of singular difficulty, he was deserted by Candish, under whom he had sailed; and after inconceivable trials from famine, mutiny, and storm, ultimately saved himself and his ship, and such of the crew as had chosen to submit to his orders. But it is a long history, and will not admit of being curtailed. As an instance of the stuff of which it was composed, he ran back in the black night in a gale of wind through the Straits of Magellan, *by a chart which he had made with the eye in passing up.* His anchors were lost or broken; the cables were parted. He could not bring up the ship; there was nothing for it but to run, and he carried her safe through along a channel often not three miles broad, sixty miles from end to end, and twisting like the reaches of a river.

For the present, however, we are forced to content ourselves with a few sketches out of the north-west

voyages. Here is one, for instance, which shows how an Englishman could deal with the Indians. Davis had landed at Gilbert's Sound, and gone up the country exploring. On his return he found his crew loud in complaints of the thievish propensities of the natives, and urgent to have an example made of some of them. On the next occasion he fired a gun at them with blank cartridge; but their nature was still too strong for them.

Seeing iron (he says), they could in no case forbear stealing; which, when I perceived, it did but minister to me occasion of laughter to see their simplicity, and I willed that they should not be hardly used, but that our company should be more diligent to keep their things, supposing it to be very hard in so short a time to make them know their evils.

In his own way, however, he took an opportunity of administering a lesson to them of a more wholesome kind than could be given with gunpowder and bullets. Like the rest of his countrymen, he believed the savage Indians in their idolatries to be worshippers of the devil. 'They are witches,' he says; 'they have images in great store, and use many kinds of enchantments.' And these enchantments they tried on one occasion to put in force against himself and his crew.

Being on shore on the 4th day of July, one of them made a long oration, and then kindled a fire, into which with many strange words and gestures he put divers things, which we supposed to be a sacrifice. Myself and certain of my company standing by, they desired us to go into the smoke. I desired them to go into the smoke, which they would by no means do. I then took one of them and thrust him into the smoke, and willed one of my company to tread out the fire, and spurn it into the sea, which was done to show them that we did contemn their sorceries.

It is a very English story—exactly what a modern Englishman would do; only, perhaps, not believing that there was any real devil in the case, which makes a difference. However, real or not real, after seeing him patiently put up with such an injury, we will hope the poor Greenlander had less respect for the devil than formerly.

Leaving Gilbert's Sound, Davis went on to the north-west, and in lat. 63° fell in with a barrier of ice, which he coasted for thirteen days without finding an opening. The very sight of an iceberg was new to all his crew; and the ropes and shrouds, though it was midsummer, becoming compassed with ice,—

> The people began to fall sick and faint-hearted—whereupon, very orderly, with good discretion, they entreated me to regard the safety of mine own life, as well as the preservation of theirs; and that I should not, through overbouldness, leave their widows and fatherless children to give me bitter curses.
>
> Whereupon, seeking counsel of God, it pleased His Divine Majesty to move my heart to prosecute that which I hope shall be to His glory, and to the contentation of every Christian mind.

He had two vessels—one of some burthen, the other a pinnace of thirty tons. The result of the counsel which he had sought was, that he made over his own large vessel to such as wished to return, and himself, 'thinking it better to die with honour than to return with infamy,' went on, with such volunteers as would follow him, in a poor leaky cutter, up the sea now in commemoration of that adventure called Davis's Straits. He ascended 4° North of the furthest known point, among storms and icebergs, when the

long days and twilight nights alone saved him from being destroyed, and, coasting back along the American shore, he discovered Hudson's Straits, supposed then to be the long-desired entrance into the Pacific. This exploit drew the attention of Walsingham, and by him Davis was presented to Burleigh, 'who was also pleased to show him great encouragement.' If either these statesmen or Elizabeth had been twenty years younger, his name would have filled a larger space in history than a small corner of the map of the world; but if he was employed at all in the last years of the century, no *vates sacer* has been found to celebrate his work, and no clue is left to guide us. He disappears; a cloud falls over him. He is known to have commanded trading vessels in the Eastern seas, and to have returned five times from India. But the details are all lost, and accident has only parted the clouds for a moment to show us the mournful setting with which he, too, went down upon the sea.

In taking out Sir Edward Michellthorne to India, in 1604, he fell in with a crew of Japanese, whose ship had been burnt, drifting at sea, without provisions, in a leaky junk. He supposed them to be pirates, but he did not choose to leave them to so wretched a death, and took them on board; and in a few hours, watching their opportunity, they murdered him.

As the fool dieth, so dieth the wise, and there is no difference; it was the chance of the sea, and the ill reward of a humane action—a melancholy end for such a man—like the end of a warrior, not dying Epaminon-

das-like on the field of victory, but cut off in some poor brawl or ambuscade. But so it was with all these men. They were cut off in the flower of their days, and few of them laid their bones in the sepulchres of their fathers. They knew the service which they had chosen, and they did not ask the wages for which they had not laboured. Life with them was no summer holiday, but a holy sacrifice offered up to duty, and what their Master sent was welcome. Beautiful is old age—beautiful as the slow-dropping mellow autumn of a rich glorious summer. In the old man, nature has fulfilled her work; she loads him with her blessings; she fills him with the fruits of a well-spent life; and, surrounded by his children and his children's children, she rocks him softly away to a grave, to which he is followed with blessings. God forbid we should not call it beautiful. It is beautiful, but not the most beautiful. There is another life, hard, rough, and thorny, trodden with bleeding feet and aching brow; the life of which the cross is the symbol; a battle which no peace follows, this side the grave; which the grave gapes to finish, before the victory is won; and—strange that it should be so—this is the highest life of man. Look back along the great names of history; there is none whose life has been other than this. They to whom it has been given to do the really highest work in this earth—whoever they are, Jew or Gentile, Pagan or Christian, warriors, legislators, philosophers, priests, poets, kings, slaves—one and all, their fate has been the same—the same bitter cup has been given to them to drink. And

so it was with the servants of England in the sixteenth century. Their life was a long battle, either with the elements or with men; and it was enough for them to fulfil their work, and to pass away in the hour when God had nothing more to bid them do. They did not complain, and why should we complain for them? Peaceful life was not what they desired, and an honourable death had no terrors for them. Theirs was the old Grecian spirit, and the great heart of the Theban poet lived again in them:

> *Θανεῖν δ' οἷσιν ἀνάγκα, τί κέ τις ἀνώνυμον*
> *γῆρας ἐν σκότῳ καθήμενος ἔψοι μάταν,*
> *ἀπάντων καλῶν ἄμμορος;*

'Seeing,' in Gilbert's own brave words, 'that death is inevitable, and the fame of virtue is immortal; wherefore in this behalf *mutare vel timere sperno.*'

In the conclusion of these light sketches we pass into an element different from that in which we have been lately dwelling. The scenes in which Gilbert and Davis played out their high natures were of the kind which we call peaceful, and the enemies with which they contended were principally the ice and the wind, and the stormy seas and the dangers of unknown and savage lands. We shall close amidst the roar of cannon and the wrath and rage of battle. Hume, who alludes to the engagement which we are going to describe, speaks of it in a tone which shows that he looked at it as something portentous and prodigious; as a thing to wonder at—but scarcely as deserving the admiration which we pay to actions properly within the

scope of humanity—and as if the energy which was displayed in it was like the unnatural strength of madness. He does not say this, but he appears to feel it; and he scarcely would have felt it if he had cared more deeply to saturate himself with the temper of the age of which he was writing. At the time, all England and all the world rang with the story. It struck a deeper terror, though it was but the action of a single ship, into the hearts of the Spanish people; it dealt a more deadly blow upon their fame and moral strength than the destruction of the Armada itself; and in the direct results which arose from it, it was scarcely less disastrous to them. Hardly, as it seems to us, if the most glorious actions which are set like jewels in the history of mankind are weighed one against the other in the balance, hardly will those 300 Spartans who in the summer morning sat 'combing their long hair for death' in the passes of Thermopylæ, have earned a more lofty estimate for themselves than this one crew of modern Englishmen.

In August 1591, Lord Thomas Howard, with six English line-of-battle ships, six victuallers, and two or three pinnaces, was lying at anchor under the Island of Florez. Light in ballast and short of water, with half his men disabled by sickness, Howard was unable to pursue the aggressive purpose on which he had been sent out. Several of the ships' crews were on shore: the ships themselves 'all pestered and rommaging,' with everything out of order. In this condition they were surprised by a Spanish fleet consisting of 53 men-

of-war. Eleven out of the twelve English ships obeyed the signal of the admiral, to cut or weigh their anchors and escape as they might. The twelfth, the 'Revenge,' was unable for the moment to follow. Of her crew of 190, ninety were sick on shore, and, from the position of the ship, there was some delay and difficulty in getting them on board. The 'Revenge' was commanded by Sir Richard Grenville, of Bideford, a man well-known in the Spanish seas, and the terror of the Spanish sailors; so fierce he was said to be, that mythic stories passed from lip to lip about him, and, like Earl Talbot or Cœur de Lion, the nurses at the Azores frightened children with the sound of his name. 'He was of great revenues, of his own inheritance,' they said, 'but of unquiet mind, and greatly affected to wars;' and from his uncontrollable propensities for blood-eating, he had volunteered his services to the Queen; 'of so hard a complexion was he, that I (John Huighen von Linschoten, who is our authority here, and who was with the Spanish fleet after the action) have been told by divers credible persons who stood and beheld him, that he would carouse three or four glasses of wine, and take the glasses between his teeth and crush them in pieces and swallow them down.' Such Grenville was to the Spaniard. To the English he was a goodly and gallant gentleman, who had never turned his back upon an enemy, and was remarkable in that remarkable time for his constancy and daring. In this surprise at Florez he was in no haste to fly. He first saw all his sick on board and stowed away on

the ballast; and then, with no more than 100 men left him to fight and work the ship, he deliberately weighed, uncertain, as it seemed at first, what he intended to do. The Spanish fleet were by this time on his weather bow, and he was persuaded (we here take his cousin Raleigh's beautiful narrative, and follow it in Raleigh's words) 'to cut his mainsail and cast about, and trust to the sailing of the ship:'—

But Sir Richard utterly refused to turn from the enemy, alledging that he would rather choose to die than to dishonour himself, his country, and her Majesty's ship, persuading his company that he would pass through their two squadrons in spite of them, and enforce those of Seville to give him way: which he performed upon diverse of the foremost, who, as the mariners term it, sprang their luff, and fell under the lee of the 'Revenge.' But the other course had been the better; and might right well have been answered in so great an impossibility of prevailing: notwithstanding, out of the greatness of his mind, he could not be persuaded.

The wind was light; the 'San Philip,' 'a huge high-carged ship' of 1500 tons, came up to windward of him, and, taking the wind out of his sails, ran aboard him.

After the 'Revenge' was entangled with the 'San Philip,' four others boarded her, two on her larboard and two on her starboard. The fight thus beginning at three o'clock in the afternoon continued very terrible all that evening. But the great 'San Philip,' having received the lower tier of the 'Revenge,' shifted herself with all diligence from her sides, utterly misliking her first entertainment. The Spanish ships were filled with soldiers, in some 200, besides the mariners, in some 500, in others 800. In ours there were none at all, besides the mariners, but the servants of the commander and some few voluntary gentlemen only. After many enterchanged vollies of great ordnance and small shot, the Spaniards deliberated to enter the 'Revenge,' and made divers attempts, hoping to force her by the

multitude of their armed soldiers and musketeers; but were still repulsed again and again, and at all times beaten back into their own ship or into the sea. In the beginning of the fight the 'George Noble;' of London, having received some shot through her by the Armadas, fell under the lee of the 'Revenge,' and asked Sir Richard what he would command him; but being one of the victuallers, and of small force, Sir Richard bade him save himself and leave him to his fortune.

This last was a little touch of gallantry, which we should be glad to remember with the honour due to the brave English sailor who commanded the 'George Noble;' but his name has passed away, and his action is an *in memoriam*, on which time has effaced the writing. All that August night the fight continued, the stars rolling over in their sad majesty, but unseen through the sulphurous clouds which hung over the scene. Ship after ship of the Spaniards came on upon the 'Revenge,' 'so that never less than two mighty galleons were at her side and aboard her,' washing up like waves upon a rock, and falling foiled and shattered back amidst the roar of the artillery. Before morning fifteen several Armadas had assailed her, and all in vain; some had been sunk at her side; and the rest, 'so ill approving of their entertainment, that at break of day they were far more willing to hearken to a composition, than hastily to make more assaults or entries.' 'But as the day increased,' says Raleigh, 'so our men decreased; and as the light grew more and more, by so much the more grew our discomfort, for none appeared in sight but enemies, save one small ship called the "Pilgrim," commanded by Jacob Whiddon, who

hovered all night to see the success, but in the morning, bearing with the "Revenge," was hunted like a hare among many ravenous hounds—but escaped.'

All the powder in the 'Revenge' was now spent, all her pikes were broken, 40 out of her 100 men killed, and a great number of the rest wounded. Sir Richard, though badly hurt early in the battle, never forsook the deck till an hour before midnight; and was then shot through the body while his wounds were being dressed, and again in the head. His surgeon was killed while attending on him; the masts were lying over the side, the rigging cut or broken, the upper works all shot in pieces, and the ship herself, unable to move, was settling slowly in the sea; the vast fleet of Spaniards lying round her in a ring, like dogs round a dying lion, and wary of approaching him in his last agony. Sir Richard, seeing that it was past hope, having fought for fifteen hours, and 'having by estimation eight hundred shot of great artillery through him,' 'commanded the master gunner, whom he knew to be a most resolute man, to split and sink the ship, that thereby nothing might remain of glory or victory to the Spaniards; seeing in so many hours they were not able to take her, having had above fifteen hours' time, above ten thousand men, and fifty-three men-of-war to perform it withal; and persuaded the company, or as many as he could induce, to yield themselves unto God and to the mercy of none else; but as they had, like valiant resolute men, repulsed so many enemies, they should not now shorten the honour of

their nation by prolonging their own lives for a few hours or a few days.'

The gunner and a few others consented. But such δαιμονίη ἀρετὴ was more than could be expected of ordinary seamen. They had dared do all which did become men, and they were not more than men. Two Spanish ships had gone down, above 1500 of their crew were killed, and the Spanish admiral could not induce any one of the rest of his fleet to board the 'Revenge' again, 'doubting lest Sir Richard would have blown up himself and them, knowing his dangerous disposition.' Sir Richard lying disabled below, the captain, 'finding the Spaniards as ready to entertain a composition as they could be to offer it,' gained over the majority of the surviving company; and the remainder then drawing back from the master gunner, they all, without further consulting their dying commander, surrendered on honourable terms. If unequal to the English in action, the Spaniards were at least as courteous in victory. It is due to them to say, that the conditions were faithfully observed; and 'the ship being marvellous unsavourie,' Alonzo de Baçon, the Spanish admiral, sent his boat to bring Sir Richard on board his own vessel.

Sir Richard, whose life was fast ebbing away, replied that 'he might do with his body what he list, for that he esteemed it not;' and as he was carried out of the ship he swooned, and reviving again, desired the company to pray for him.

The admiral used him with all humanity, 'com-

mending his valour and worthiness, being unto them a rare spectacle, and a resolution seldom approved.' The officers of the fleet, too, John Higgins tells us, crowded round to look at him; and a new fight had almost broken out between the Biscayans and the 'Portugals,' each claiming the honour of having boarded the 'Revenge.'

In a few hours Sir Richard, feeling his end approaching, showed not any sign of faintness, but spake these words in Spanish, and said, 'Here die I, Richard Grenville, with a joyful and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do that hath fought for his country, queen, religion, and honour. Whereby my soul most joyfully departeth out of this body, and shall always leave behind it an everlasting fame of a valiant and true soldier that hath done his duty as he was bound to do.' When he had finished these or other such like words, he gave up the ghost with great and stout courage, and no man could perceive any sign of heaviness in him.

Such was the fight at Florez, in that August of 1591, without its equal in such of the annals of mankind as the thing which we call history has preserved to us; scarcely equalled by the most glorious fate which the imagination of Barrère could invent for the 'Vengeur.' Nor did the matter end without a sequel awful as itself. Sea battles have been often followed by storms, and without a miracle; but with a miracle, as the Spaniards and the English alike believed, or without one, as we moderns would prefer believing, 'there ensued on this action a tempest so terrible as was never seen or heard the like before.' A fleet of merchantmen joined the Armada immediately after the battle, forming in all 140 sail; and of these

140, only 32 ever saw Spanish harbour. The rest foundered, or were lost on the Azores. The men-of-war had been so shattered by shot as to be unable to carry sail; and the 'Revenge' herself, disdaining to survive her commander, or as if to complete his own last baffled purpose, like Samson, buried herself and her 200 prize crew under the rocks of St Michael's.

And it may well be thought and presumed (says John Huighen) that it was no other than a just plague purposely sent upon the Spaniards; and that it might be truly said, the taking of the 'Revenge' was justly revenged on them; and not by the might or force of man, but by the power of God. As some of them openly said in the Isle of Terceira, that they believed verily God would consume them, and that he took part with the Lutherans and heretics . . . . saying further, that so soon as they had thrown the dead body of the Vice-Admiral Sir Richard Grenville overboard, they verily thought that as he had a devilish faith and religion, and therefore the devil loved him, so he presently sunk into the bottom of the sea and down into hell, where he raised up all the devils to the revenge of his death, and that they brought so great a storm and torments upon the Spaniards, because they only maintained the Catholic and Romish religion. Such and the like blasphemies against God they ceased not openly to utter.

HOMER.[1]

TROY fell before the Greeks; and in its turn the war of Troy is now falling before the critics. That ten years' death-struggle, in which the immortals did not disdain to mingle—those massive warriors, with their grandeur and their chivalry, have, 'like an unsubstantial pageant, faded' before the wand of these modern enchanters; and the Iliad and the Odyssey, and the other early legends, are discovered to be no more than the transparent myths of an old cosmogony, the arabesques and frescoes with which the imagination of the Ionian poets set off and ornamented the palace of the heavens, the struggle of the earth with the seasons, and the labours of the sun through his twelve signs.

Nay, with Homer himself it was likely at one time to have fared no better. His works, indeed, were indestructible, yet if they could not be destroyed, they might be disorganized; and with their instinctive

[1] *Fraser's Magazine*, 1851.

hatred of facts, the critics fastened on the historical existence of the poet. The origin of the poems was distributed among the clouds of pre-historic imagination; and—instead of a single inspired Homer for their author, we were required to believe in some extraordinary spontaneous generation, or in some collective genius of an age which ignorance had personified.

But the person of a poet has been found more difficult of elimination than a mere fact of history. Facts, it was once said, were stubborn things; but in our days we have changed all that; a fact, under the knife of a critic, splits in pieces, and is dissected out of belief with incredible readiness. The helpless thing lies under his hand like a foolish witness in a law court, when browbeaten by an unscrupulous advocate, and is turned about and twisted this way and that way, till in its distraction it contradicts itself, and bears witness against itself; and to escape from torture, at last flies utterly away, itself half doubting its own existence.

But it requires more cunning weapons to destroy a Homer; like his own immortals, he may be wounded, but he cannot have the life carved out of him by the prosaic strokes of common men. His poems have but to be disintegrated to unite again, so strong are they in the individuality of their genius. The singleness of their structure—the unity of design—the distinctness of drawing in the characters—the inimitable peculiarities of manner in each of them, seem to place beyond serious question, after the worst onslaught of the

Wolfian critics, that both Iliad and Odyssey, whether or not the work of the same mind, are at least each of them singly the work of one.

Let them leave us Homer, however, and on the rank and file of facts they may do their worst; we can be indifferent to, or even thankful for, what slaughter they may make. In the legends of the Theogonia, in that of Zeus and Cronus, for instance, there is evidently a metaphysical allegory; in the legends of Persephone, or of the Dioscuri, a physical one; in that of Athene, a profoundly philosophical one; and fused as the entire system was in the intensely poetical conception of the early thinkers, it would be impossible, even if it were desirable, at this time of day, to disentangle the fibres of all these various elements. Fact and theory, the natural and the supernatural, the legendary and the philosophical, shade off so imperceptibly one into the other, in the stories of the Olympians, or of their first offspring, that we can never assure ourselves that we are on historic ground, or that, antecedent to the really historic age, there is any such ground to be found anywhere. The old notion, that the heroes were deified men, is no longer tenable. With but few exceptions, we can trace their names as the names of the old gods of the Hellenic or Pelasgian races; and if they appeared later in human forms, they descended from Olympus to assume them. Diomed was the Œtolian sun-god; Achilles was worshipped in Thessaly long before he became the hero of the tale of Troy. The tragedy of the house of Atreus, and the bloody bath of

Agamemnon, as we are now told with appearance of certainty,[1] are humanized stories of the physical struggle of the opposing principles of life and death, light and darkness, night and day, winter and summer.

And let them be so; we need not be sorry to believe that there is no substantial basis for these tales of crime. The history of mankind is not so pure but that we can afford to lose a few dark pages out of the record. Let it be granted that of the times which Homer sung historically we know nothing literal at all—not any names of any kings, of any ministers, wars, intrigues, revolutions, crimes. They are all gone—dead—passed away; their vacant chronicles may be silent as the tombs in which their bones are buried. Of such stuff as that with which historians fill their pages there is no trace; it is a blank, vacant as the annals of the Hottentot or of the Red Indian. Yet when all is said, there remain still to us in Homer's verse, materials richer, perhaps, than exist for any period of the ancient world, richer than even for the brilliant days of Pericles, or of the Cæsars, to construct a history of another kind—a history, a picture not of the times of which he sang, but of the men among whom he lived. How they acted; how they thought, talked, and felt; what they made of this earth, and of their place in it; their private life and their public life; men and women; masters and servants; rich and poor—we have it all delineated in the marvellous verse of a poet who, be he what he may,

[1] Mackay's *Progress of the Intellect.*

was in this respect the greatest which the earth has ever seen. In extent, the information is little enough; but in the same sense as it has been said that an hour at an Athenian supper-party would teach us more Grecian life and character than all Aristophanes, Homer's pictures of life and manners are so living, so distinct, so palpable, that a whole prose encyclopædia of disconnected facts could give us nothing like them. It is the marvellous property of verse—one, if we rightly consider it, which would excuse any superstition on the origin of language—that the metrical and rhythmic arrangement of syllable and sound is able to catch and express back to us, not the stories of actions, but the actions themselves, with all the feelings which inspire them; to call up human action, and all other outward things in which human hearts take interest—to produce them, or to reproduce them, with a distinctness which shall produce the same emotions which they would themselves produce when really existing. The thing itself is made present before us by an exercise of creative power as genuine as that of Nature herself; which, perhaps, is but the same power manifesting itself at one time in words, at another in outward phenomena. Whatever be the cause, the fact is so. Poetry has this life-giving power, and prose has it not; and thus the poet is the truest historian. Whatever is properly valuable in history the poet gives us—not events and names, but emotion, but action, but life. He is the heart of his age, and his verse expresses his age; and what matter is it by what name he describes his places or his persons? What

matter is it what his own name was, while we have himself, and while we have the originals, from which he drew? The work and the life are all for which we need care, are all which can really interest us; the names are nothing. Though Phœacia was a dream-land, or a symbol of the Elysian fields, yet Homer drew his material, his island, his palaces, his harbour, his gardens of perennial beauty, from those fair cities which lay along the shores of his own Ionia; and like his blind Demodocus, Homer doubtless himself sung those very hymns which now delight us so, in the halls of many a princely Alcinous.

The prose historian may give us facts and names; he may catalogue the successions, and tell us long stories of battles, and of factions, and of political intrigues; he may draw characters for us, of the sort which figure commonly in such features of human affairs, men of the unheroic, unpoetic kind—the Cleons, the Sejanuses, the Tiberiuses, a Philip the Second or a Louis Quatorze, in whom the noble element died out into selfishness and vulgarity. But great men—and all MEN properly so called (whatever is genuine and natural in them)—lie beyond prose, and can only be really represented by the poet. This is the reason why such men as Alexander, or as Cæsar, or as Cromwell, so perplex us in histories, because they and their actions are beyond the scope of the art through which we have looked at them. We compare the man as the historian represents him, with the track of his path through the world. The work is the work of a giant; the man,

stripped of the vulgar appendages with which the stunted imagination of his biographer may have set him off, is full of meannesses and littlenesses, and is scarcely greater than one of ourselves. Prose, that is, has attempted something to which it is not equal. It describes a figure which it calls Cæsar; but it is not Cæsar, it is a monster. For the same reason, prose fictions, novels, and the like, are worthless for more than a momentary purpose. The life which they are able to represent is not worth representing. There is no person so poor in his own eyes as not to gaze with pleasure into a looking-glass; and the prose age may value its own image in the novel. But the value of all such representations is ephemeral. It is with the poet's art as with the sculptor's—sandstone will not carve like marble, its texture is too loose to retain a sharply moulded outline. The actions of men, if they are true, noble, and genuine, are strong enough to bear the form and bear the polish of verse; if loose or feeble, they crumble away into the softer undulations of prose.

What the life was whose texture bore shaping into Homer's verse, we intend to spend these pages in examining. It is, of course, properly to be sought for in the poems themselves. But we shall here be concerned mainly with features which in the original are rather secondary than prominent, and which have to be collected out of fragments, here a line, and there a line, out of little hints, let fall by Homer as it were by accident. Things too familiar to his own hearers to require dwelling on, to us, whose object is to make out just

those very things which were familiar, are of special and singular value. It is not an inquiry which will much profit us, if we come to it with any grand notions of the 'progress of the species,' for in many ways it will discourage the belief in progress.

We have fallen into ways of talking of the childhood and infancy of the race, as if no beards had grown on any face before the modern Reformation; and even people who know what old Athens was under Pericles, look commonly on earlier Greece as scarcely struggling out of its cradle. It would have fared so with all early history except for the Bible. The Old Testament has operated partially to keep us in our modest senses, and we can see something grand about the patriarchs; but this is owing to exceptional causes, which do not apply to other literature; and in spite of our admiration of Homer's poetry, we regard his age, and the contemporary periods in the other people of the earth, as a kind of childhood little better than barbarism. We look upon it, at all events, as too far removed in every essential of spirit or of form from our own, to enable us to feel for it any strong interest or sympathy. More or less we have, every one of us, felt something of this kind. Homer's men are, at first sight, unlike any men that we have ever seen; and it is not without a shock of surprise that, for the first time, we fall, in reading him, across some little trait of humanity which in form as well as spirit is really identical with our own experience. Then, for the moment, all is changed with us—gleams of light flash out, in which the drapery becomes

transparent, and we see the human form behind it, and that entire old world in the warm glow of flesh and blood. Such is the effect of those few child scenes of his, which throw us back into our old familiar childhood. With all these years between us, there is no difference between their children and ours, and child would meet child without sense of strangeness in common games and common pleasures.

The little Ulysses, climbing on the knees of his father's guest, coaxing for a taste of the red wine, and spilling it as he starts at the unusual taste; or that other most beautiful picture of him running at Laertes's side in the garden at Ithaca, the father teaching the boy the names of the fruit-trees, and making presents to him of this tree and of that tree for his very own, to help him to remember what they were called; the partition wall of three thousand years melts away as we look back at scenes like these; that broad, world-experienced man was once, then, such a little creature as we remember ourselves, and Laertes a calm, kind father of the nineteenth century. Then, as now, the children loved to sport upon the shore, and watch the inrolling waves;—then, as now, the boy-architect would pile the moist sand into mimic town or castle, and when the work was finished, sweep it away again in wanton humour with foot and hand;—then, as now, the little tired maiden would cling to her mother's skirt, and trotting painfully along beside her, look up wistfully and plead with moist eyes to be carried in her arms. Nay, and among the grown ones, where time has not

changed the occupation, and the forms of culture have little room to vary, we meet again with very familiar faces. There is Melantho, the not over-modest tittering waiting-maid—saucy to her mistress and the old housekeeper, and always running after the handsome young princes. Unhappy Melantho, true child of universal nature! grievous work we should make with most households, if all who resemble thee were treated to as rough a destiny. And there are other old friends whom it is pleasant enough to recognize at so long a distance. 'Certain smooth-haired, sleek-faced fellows—insolent where their lords would permit them; inquisitive and pert, living but to eat and drink, and pilfering the good things, to convey them stealthily to their friends outside the castle wall.' The thing that hath been, that shall be again. When Homer wrote, the type had settled into its long-enduring form. 'Such are they,' he adds, in his good-natured irony, 'as the valet race ever love to be.'

With such evidence of identity among us all, it is worth while to look closer at the old Greeks, to try to find in Homer something beyond fine poetry, or exciting adventures or battle-scenes, or material for scholarship; for awhile to set all that aside, and look in him for the story of real living men—set to pilgrimize in the old way on the same old earth—men such as we are, children of one family, with the same work to do, to live the best life they could, and to save their souls—with the same trials, the same passions, the same difficulties, if with weaker means of meeting them.

And first for their religion.

Let those who like it, lend their labour to the unravelling the secrets of the mythologies. Theogonies and Theologies are not religion; they are but its historic dress and outward or formal expression, which, like a language, may be intelligible to those who see the inward meaning in the sign, but no more than confused sound to us who live in another atmosphere, and have no means of transferring ourselves into the sentiment of an earlier era. It is not in these forms of a day or of an age that we should look for the real belief —the real feelings of the heart; but in the natural expressions which burst out spontaneously—expressions of opinion on Providence, on the relation of man to God, on the eternal laws by which this world is governed. Perhaps we misuse the word in speaking of religion; we ought rather to speak of piety: piety is always simple; the emotion is too vast, too overpowering, whenever it is genuine, to be nice or fantastic in its form; and leaving philosophies and cosmogonies to shape themselves in myth and legend, it speaks itself out with a calm and humble clearness. We may trifle with our own discoveries, and hand them over to the fancy or the imagination for elaborate decoration. We may shroud over supposed mysteries under an enigmatic veil, and adapt the degrees of initiation to the capacities of our pupils; but before the vast facts of God and Providence, the difference between man and man dwarfs into nothing. They are no discoveries of our own with which we can meddle, but revelations of the Infinite,

which, like the sunlight, shed themselves on all alike, wise and unwise, good and evil, and they claim and they permit no other acknowledgment from us than the simple obedience of our lives, and the plainest confession of our lips.

Such confessions, except in David's Psalms, we shall not anywhere find more natural or unaffected than in Homer—most definite, yet never elaborate—as far as may be from any complimenting of Providence, yet expressing the most unquestioning conviction. We shall not often remember them when we set about religion as a business; but when the occasions of life stir the feelings in us on which religion itself reposes, if we were as familiar with the Iliad as with the Psalms, the words of the old Ionian singer would leap as naturally to our lips as those of the Israelite king.

Zeus is not always the questionable son of Cronus, nor the gods always the mythologic Olympians. Generally, it is true, they appear as a larger order of subject beings—beings like men, and subject to a higher control—in a position closely resembling that of Milton's angels, and liable like them to passion and to error. But at times, the father of gods and men is the Infinite and Eternal Ruler—the living Providence of the world—and the lesser gods are the immortal administrators of his Divine will throughout the lower creation. For ever at the head of the universe there is an awful spiritual power; when Zeus appears with a distinct and positive personality, he is himself subordinate to an authority which elsewhere is one with himself. Wher-

ever either he or the other gods are made susceptible of emotion, the Invisible is beyond and above them. When Zeus is the personal father of Sarpedon, and his private love conflicts with the law of the eternal order, though he has power to set aside the law, he dares not break it; but in the midst of his immortality, and on his own awful throne, he weeps tears of blood in ineffectual sorrow for his dying child. And again, there is a power supreme both over Zeus and over Poseidon, of which Iris reminds the latter, when she is sent to rebuke him for his disobedience to his brother. It is a law, she says, that the younger shall obey the elder, and the Erinnys will revenge its breach even on a god.

But descending from the more difficult Pantheon among mankind, the Divine law of justice is conceived as clearly as we in this day can conceive it. The supreme power is the same immortal lover of justice and the same hater of iniquity; and justice means what we mean by justice, and iniquity what we mean by iniquity. There is no diffidence, no scepticism on this matter; the moral law is as sure as day and night, summer and winter. Thus in the sixteenth Iliad—

'When in the market-place men deal unjustly, and the rulers decree crooked judgment, not regarding the fear of God,' God sends the storm, and the earthquake, and the tempests, as the executors of his vengeance.

Again, Ulysses says—

'God looks upon the children of men, and punishes the wrong doer.'

And Eumæus—

'The gods love not violence and wrong; but the man whose ways are righteous, him they honour.'

•• Even when as mere Olympians they put off their celestial nature, and mix in earthly strife, and are thus laid open to earthly suffering, a mystery still hangs about them; Diomed, even while he crosses the path of Ares, feels all the while 'that they are short-lived who contend with the Immortals.' Ajax boasts that he will save himself in spite of heaven, and immediately the wave dashes him upon the rocks. One light word escaped Ulysses in the excitement of his escape from the Cyclops, which nine years of suffering hardly expiated.

The same spirit which teaches Christians that those who have no earthly friend have specially a friend above to care for and to avenge them, taught the Ionians a proverb which appears again and again in Homer, that the stranger and the poor man are the patrimony of God; and it taught them, also, that sometimes men entertained the immortals unawares. It was a faith, too, which was more than words with them; for we hear of no vagrant acts or alien acts, and it was sacrilege to turn away from the gate whoever asked its hospitality. Times are changed. The world was not so crowded as it is now, and perhaps rogues were less abundant; but at any rate those antique Greeks did what they said. We say what they said, while in the same breath we say, too, that it is impossible to do it.

In every way, the dependence of man on a special heavenly Providence was a matter of sure and certain

conviction with them. Telemachus appeals to the belief in the Council at Ithaca. He questions it at Pylos, and is at once rebuked by Athene. Both in Iliad and Odyssey to live justly is the steady service which the gods require, and their favour as surely follows when that service is paid, as a Nemesis sooner or later follows surely, too, on the evil-doers.

But without multiplying evidence, as we easily might, from every part of both Iliad and Odyssey, the sceptical and the believing forms of thought and feeling on this very subject are made points of dramatic contrast, to show off the opposition of two separate characters; and this is clear proof that such thoughts and feelings must have been familiar to Homer's hearers: if it were not so, his characters would have been without interest to his age—they would have been individual, and not universal; and no expenditure of intellect, or passion, would have made men care to listen to him. The two persons who throughout the Iliad stand out in relief in contrast to each other are, of course, Hector and Achilles; and faith in God (as distinct from a mere recognition of him) is as directly the characteristic of Hector as in Achilles it is entirely absent. Both characters are heroic, but the heroism in them springs from opposite sources. Both are heroic, because both are strong; but the strength of one is in himself, and the strength of the other is in his faith. Hector is a patriot; Achilles does not know what patriotism means;—Hector is full of tenderness and human affection; Achilles is self-enveloped. Even his love for Patroclus

is not pure, for Patroclus is as the moon to the sun of Achilles, and Achilles sees his own glory reflected on his friend. They have both a forecast of their fate; but Hector, in his great brave way, scoffs at omens; he knows that there is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow, and defies augury. To do his duty is the only omen for which Hector cares; and if death must be, he can welcome it like a gallant man, if it find him fighting for his country. Achilles is moody, speculative, and subjective; he is too proud to attempt an ineffectual resistance to what he knows to be inevitable, but he alternately murmurs at it and scorns it. Till his passion is stirred by his friend's death, he seems equally to disdain the greatness of life and the littleness of it; the glories of a hero are not worth dying for; and like Solomon, and almost in Solomon's words, he complains that there is one event to all—

Ἐν δὲ ἑῇ τιμῇ ἠ μὲν κακὸς ἠὲ καὶ ἐσθλός.

To gratify his own spleen, he will accept an inglorious age in Thessaly, in exchange for a hero's immortality; as again in the end it is but to gratify his own wounded pride that he goes out to brave a fate which he scorns while he knows that it will subdue him. Thus, Achilles is the hero of the stern human, self-sufficing spirit, which does not deny or question destiny, but seeing nothing in it except a cold, iron law, meets force with force, and holds up against it an unbroken, unbending will. Human nature is at its best but a miserable business to him; death and sorrow are its

inevitable lot. As a brave man, he will not fear such things, but he will not pretend to regard them as anything but detestable; and he comforts the old, weeping king of Troy, whose age he was himself bringing down to the grave in sorrow, with philosophic meditations on the vanity of all things, and a picture of Zeus mixing the elements of life out of the two urns of good and evil.

Turn to Hector, and we pass from shadow into sunlight. Achilles is all self, Hector all self-forgetfulness; Achilles all pride, Hector all modesty. The confidence of Achilles is in himself and in his own arm; Hector knows (and the strongest expressions of the kind in all the Iliad are placed pointedly in Hector's mouth) that there is no strength except from above. 'God's will,' he says, 'is over all; he makes the strong man to fear, and gives the victory to the weak, if it shall please him.' And at last, when he meets Achilles, he answers his bitter words, not with a defiance, but calmly saying, 'I know that thou art mighty, and that my strength is far less than thine; but these things lie in the will of the gods, and I, though weaker far than thou, may yet take thy life from thee, if the Immortals choose to have it so.'

So far, then, on the general fact of Divine Providence the feeling of Homer, and therefore of his countrymen, is distinct. Both the great poems bearing his name speak in the same language. But beyond the general fact, many questions rise in the application of the creed, and on one of these (it is among several remarkable differences which seem to make the Odyssey

as of a later age) there is a very singular discrepancy. In the Iliad, the life of a man on this side the grave is enough for the completion of his destiny—for his reward, if he lives nobly; for his punishment, if he be base or wicked. Without repinings or scepticisms at the apparent successes of bad men, the poet is contented with what he finds, accepting cheerfully the facts of life as they are; it never seems to occur to him as seriously possible that a bad man could succeed or a good one fail; and as the ways of Providence, therefore, require no vindicating, neither his imagination nor his curiosity tempts him into penetrating the future. The house of Hades is the long home to which men go when dismissed out of their bodies; but it is a dim, shadowy place, of which we see nothing, and concerning which no conjectures are ventured. Achilles, in his passion over Patroclus, cries out, that although the dead forget the dead in the halls of the departed, yet that he will remember his friend; and through the Iliad there is nothing clearer than these vague words to show with what hopes or fears the poet looked forward to death. So far, therefore, his faith may seem imperfect; yet, perhaps, not the less noble because imperfect; religious men in general are too well contented with the promise of a future life, as of a scene where the seeming shortcomings of the Divine administration will be carried out with larger equity. But whether imperfect or not, or whatever be the account of the omission, the theory of Hades in the Odyssey is developed into far greater distinctness; the future is still,

indeed, shadowy, but it is no longer uncertain; there is the dreadful prison-house, with the judge upon his throne—and the darker criminals are overtaken by the vengeance which was delayed in life. The thin phantoms of the great ones of the past flit to and fro, mourning wearily for their lost mortality, and feeding on its memory. And more than this, as if it were beginning to be felt that something more was wanted after all to satisfy us with the completeness of the Divine rule, we have a glimpse—it is but one, but it is like a ray of sunshine falling in upon the darkness of the grave—'of the far-off Elysian fields where dwells Rhadamanthus with the golden hair, where life is ever sweet, and sorrow is not, nor winter, nor any rain or storm, and the never-dying zephyrs blow soft and cool from off the ocean.'

However vague the filling up of such a picture, the outline is correct to the best which has been revealed even in Christianity, and it speaks nobly for the people among whom, even in germ, such ideas could root themselves. But think what we will of their notions of the future, the old Greek faith, considered as a practical and not a theological system, is truly admirable, clear, rational, and moral; if it does not profess to deal with the mysteries of evil in the heart, it is prompt and stern with them in their darker outward manifestations, and, as far as it goes, as a guide in the common daily business of life, it scarcely leaves anything unsaid.

How far it went we shall see in the details of the life itself, the most important of which in the eyes of a

modern will be the social organization; and when he looks for organization, he will be at once at a loss, for he will find the fact of government yet without defined form;—he will find law, but without a public sword to enforce it; and a 'social machine' moving without friction under the easy control of opinion. There are no wars of classes, no politics, no opposition of interests, a sacred feeling of the will of the gods keeping every one in his proper subordination. It was a sacred duty that the younger should obey the elder, that the servant should obey his master, that property should be respected; in war, that the leader should be obeyed without questioning; in peace, that public questions should be brought before the assembly of the people, and settled quietly as the Council determined. In this assembly the prince presided, and beyond this presidency his authority at home does not seem to have extended. Of course there was no millennium in Ionia, and men's passions were pretty much what they are now. Without any organized means of repressing crime when it did appear, the people were exposed to, and often suffered under, extreme forms of violence—violence such as that of the suitors at Ithaca, or of Ægisthus at Argos. On the other hand, what a state of cultivation it implies, what peace and comfort in all classes, when society could hold together for a day with no more complete defence! And, moreover, there are disadvantages in elaborate police systems. Self-reliance is one of the highest virtues in which this world is intended to discipline us; and to depend upon ourselves

even for our own personal safety is a large element in moral training.

But not to dwell on this, and to pass to the way in which the men of those days employed themselves.

Our first boy's feeling with the Iliad is, that Homer is pre-eminently a poet of war; that battles were his own passion, and tales of battles the delight of his listeners. His heroes appear like a great fighting aristocracy, such as the after Spartans were, Homer himself like another Tyrtæus, and the poorer occupations of life too menial for their notice or for his. They seem to live for glory—the one glory worth caring for only to be won upon the battle-field, and their exploits the one worthy theme of the poet's song. This is our boyish impression, and, like other such, it is very different from the truth. If war had been a passion with the Ionians, as it was with the Teutons and the Norsemen, the god of battles would have been supreme in the Pantheon; and Zeus would scarcely have called Ares the most hateful spirit in Olympus—most hateful, *because* of his delight in war and carnage. Mr Carlyle looks forward to a chivalry of labour. He rather wishes than expects that a time may come when the campaign of industry against anarchic nature may gather into it those feelings of gallantry and nobleness which have found their vent hitherto in fighting only. The modern man's work, Mr Carlyle says, is no longer to splinter lances or break down walls, but to break soil, to build barns and factories, and to find a high employment for himself in what hitherto has been despised as degrading.

How to elevate labour—how to make it beautiful—how to enlist the *spirit* in it (for in no other way can it be made humanly profitable), that is the problem which he looks wistfully to the future to solve for us. He may look to the past as well as to the future; in the old Ionia he will find all for which he wishes. The wise Ulysses built his own house, and carved his own bed. Princes killed and cooked their own food. It was a holy work with them—their way of saying grace for it; for they offered the animal in his death to the gods, and they were not butchers, but sacrificing priests. Even a keeper of swine is called noble, and fights like a hero; and the young princess of Phœacia—the loveliest and gracefullest of Homer's women—drove the clothes-cart and washed linen with her own beautiful hands. Not only was labour free—for so it was among the early Romans; or honourable, so it was among the Israelites, —but it was beautiful—beautiful in the artist's sense, as perhaps elsewhere it has never been. In later Greece —in what we call the glorious period—toil had gathered about it its modern crust of supposed baseness—it was left to slaves; and wise men, in their philosophic lecture-rooms, spoke of it as unworthy of the higher specimens of cultivated humanity.

But Homer finds, in its most homely forms, fit illustrations for the most glorious achievements of his heroes; and in every page we find, in simile or metaphor, some common scene of daily life worked out with elaborate beauty. What the popular poet chooses for his illustrations are as good a measure as we can have of the popular

feeling, and the images which he suggests are, of course, what he knows his hearers will be pleased to dwell upon. There is much to be said about this, and we shall return to it presently; in the mean time, we must not build on indirect evidence. The designs on the shield of Achilles are, together, a complete picture of Homer's microcosm, Homer surely never thought inglorious or ignoble what the immortal art of Hephaistos condescended to imitate.

The first groups of figures point a contrast which is obviously intentional; and the significance becomes sadly earnest when we remember who it was that was to bear the shield. The moral is a very modern one, and the picture might be called by the modern name of Peace and War. There are two cities, embodying in their condition the two ideas. In one, a happy wedding is going forward; the pomp of the hymeneal procession is passing along the streets; the air is full of music, and the women are standing at their doors to gaze. The other is in the terrors of a siege; the hostile armies glitter under the walls, the women and children press into the defence, and crowd to the battlements. In the first city, a quarrel rises, and wrong is made right, not by violence and fresh wrong, but by the majesty of law and order. The heads of the families are sitting gravely in the market-place, the cause is heard, the compensation set, the claim awarded. Under the walls of the other city an ambush lies, like a wild beast on the watch for its prey. The unsuspecting herdsmen pass on with their flocks to the waterside; the spoilers spring from their hiding-place, and all is strife, and

death, and horror, and confusion. If there were other war-scenes on the shield, it might be doubted whether Homer intended so strong a contrast as he executed; but fighting for its own sake was evidently held in slight respect with him. The forms of life which he thought really beautiful follow in a series of exquisite Rubens-like pictures: harvest scenes and village festivals, the ploughing and the vintage, or the lion-hunt on the reedy margin of the river; and he describes them with a serene, sunny enjoyment which no other old world art or poetry gives us anything in the least resembling. Even we ourselves, in our own pastorals, are struggling with but half success, after what Homer entirely possessed. What a majesty he has thrown into his harvest scene! The yellow corn falling, the boys following to gather up the large armsfull as they drop behind the reapers; in the distance a banquet preparing under the trees; in the centre, in the midst of his workmen, the king sitting in mellow silence, sceptre in hand, looking on with gladdened heart. Again we see the ploughmen, unlike what are to be seen in our corn-grounds, turning their teams at the end of the furrow, and attendants standing ready with the wine-cup, to hand to them as they pass. Homer had seen these things, or he would not have sung of them; and princes and nobles might have shared such labour without shame, when kings presided over it, and gods designed it, and the divine Achilles bore its image among his insignia in the field.

Analogous to this, and as part of the same feeling,

is that intense enjoyment of natural scenery, so keen in Homer, and of which the Athenian poets show not a trace; as, for instance, in that night landscape by the sea, finished off in a few lines only, but so exquisitely perfect! The broad moon, gleaming through the mist as it parts suddenly from off the sky; the crags and headlands, and soft wooded slopes, shining out in the silver light, and earth and sea transformed into fairy land.

We spoke of Homer's similes as illustrative of the Ionic feelings about war. War, of course, was glorious to him—but war in a glorious cause. Wars there were—wars in plenty, as there have been since, and as it is like there will be for some time to come; and a just war, of all human employments, is the one which most calls out whatever nobleness there is in man. It was the thing itself, the actual fighting and killing, as apart from the heroism for which it makes opportunities, for which we said that he showed no taste. His manner shows that he felt like a cultivated man, and not like a savage. His spirit stirs in him as he goes out with his hero to the battle; but there is no drunken delight in blood; we never hear of warriors as in that grim Hall of the Nibelungen, quenching their thirst in the red stream; never anything of that fierce exultation in carnage with which the war poetry of so many nations, late and old, is crimsoned. Everything, on the contrary, is contrived so as to soften the merely horrible, and fix our interest only on what is grand or beautiful. We are never left to dwell long together

on scenes of death, and when the battle is at its fiercest, our minds are called off by the rapid introduction (either by simile or some softer turn of human feeling) of other associations, not contrived as an inferior artist would contrive, to deepen our emotions, but to soften and relieve them.

Two warriors meet, and exchange their high words of defiance; we hear the grinding of the spear-head, as it pierces shield and breast-plate, and the crash of the armour, as this or that hero falls. But at once, instead of being left at his side to see him bleed, we are summoned away to the soft water meadow, the lazy river, the tall poplar, now waving its branches against the sky, now lying its length along in the grass beside the water, and the wood-cutter with peaceful industry labouring and lopping at it. In the thick of the universal mêlée, when the stones and arrows are raining on the combatants, and some furious hailstorm is the slightest illustration with which we should expect him to heighten the effect of the human tempest, so sure Homer is that he has painted the thing itself in its own intense reality, that his simile is the stillest phenomenon in all nature—a stillness of activity, infinitely expressive of the density of the shower of missiles, yet falling like oil on water on the ruffled picture of the battle; the snow descending in the *still* air, covering first hills, then plains and fields and farmsteads; covering the rocks down to the very water's edge, and clogging the waves as they roll in. Again in that fearful death-wrestle at the Grecian wall, when gates

and battlements are sprinkled over with blood, and neither Greeks nor Trojans can force their way against the other, we have, first, as an image of the fight itself, two men in the field, with measuring rods, disputing over a land boundary; and for the equipoise of the two armies, the softest of all home scenes, a poor working woman weighing out her wool before weaving it, to earn a scanty subsistence for herself and for her children.

Of course the similes are not all of this kind; it would be monotonous if they were; but they occur often enough to mark their meaning. In the direct narrative, too, we see the same tendency. Sarpedon struck through the thigh is borne off the field, the long spear trailing from the wound, and there is too much haste to draw it out. Hector flies past him and has no time to speak; all is dust, hurry, and confusion. Even Homer can only pause for a moment, but in three lines he lays the wounded hero under a tree, he brings a dear friend to his side, and we refresh ourselves in a beautiful scene, when the lance is taken out and Sarpedon faints, and comes slowly back to life, with the cool air fanning him. We may look in vain through the Nibelungen Lied for anything like this. The Swabian poet can be tender before the battle, but in the battle itself his barbaric nature is too strong for him, and he scents nothing but blood. In the Iliad, on the contrary, the very battles of the gods, grand and awful as they are, relieve rather than increase the human horror. In the magnificent scene, where Achilles, weary with slaughter, pauses on the bank of

the Scamander, and the angry river god, whose course is checked by the bodies of the slain, swells up to revenge them and destroy him, the natural and the supernatural are so strangely blended, that when Poseidon lights the forest, and god meets god and element meets element, the convulsion is too tremendous to enhance the fierceness of Achilles; it concentrates the interest on itself, and Achilles and Hector, flying Trojan and pursuing Greek, for the time melt out and are forgotten.

We do not forget that there is nothing of this kind, no relief, no softening, in the great scene at the conclusion of the Odyssey. All is stern enough and terrible enough there; more terrible, if possible, because more distinct, than its modern counterpart in Criemhildas Hall. But there is an obvious reason for this, and it does not make against what we have been saying. It is not delight in slaughter, but it is the stern justice of revenge which we have here; not, as in the Iliad, hero meeting hero, but the long crime receiving at last its Divine punishment; the breaking of the one storm, which from the beginning has been slowly and awfully gathering.

With Homer's treatment of a battle-field, and as illustrating the conclusion which we argue from it, we are tempted to draw parallels from two modern poets—one a German, who was taken away in the morning of his life; the other, the most gifted of modern Englishmen. Each of these two has attempted the same subject, and the treatment in each case embodies, in a

similar manner, modern ways of thinking about it.

The first is from the 'Albigenses' of young Lenau, who has since died lunatic, we have heard, as he was not unlikely to have died with such thoughts in him. It is the eve which followed one of those terrible struggles at Toulouse, and the poet's imagination is hanging at moon-rise over the scene. 'The low broad field scattered over thick with corpses, all silent, dead, —the last sob spent,'—the priest's thanksgiving for the Catholic victory having died into an echo, and only the 'vultures crying their Te Deum laudamus.'

> Hat Gott der Herr den Körperstoff erschaffen,
> Hat ihn hervorgebracht ein böser Geist,
> Darüber stritten sie mit allen Waffen
> Und werden von den Vögeln nun gespeist,
> Die, ohne ihren Ursprung nachzufragen,
> Die Körper da sich lassen wohl behagen.

'Was it God the Lord who formed the substance of their bodies? or did some evil spirit bring it forth? It was for this with all their might they fought, and now they are devoured there by the wild birds, who sit gorging merrily over their carrion, *without asking from whence it came.*'

In Homer, as we saw, the true hero is master over death—death has no terror for him. He meets it, if it is to be, calmly and proudly, and then it is over; whatever offensive may follow after it, is concealed, or at least passed lightly over. Here, on the contrary, everything most offensive is dwelt upon with an agonizing intensity, and the triumph of death is made to extend, not over the body only, but over the soul,

whose heroism it turns to mockery. The cause in which a man dies, is what can make his death beautiful; but here nature herself, in her stern, awful way, is reading her sentence over the cause itself as a wild and frantic dream. We ought to be revolted—doubly revolted, one would think, and yet we are not so; instead of being revolted, we are affected with a sense of vast, sad magnificence. Why is this? Because we lose sight of the scene, or lose the sense of its horror, in the confusion of the spirit. It is the true modern tragedy; the note which sounds through Shakespeare's 'Sonnets,' through 'Hamlet,' through 'Faust.' All the deeper trials of the modern heart might be gathered out of those few lines; the sense of wasted nobleness—nobleness spending its energies upon what time seems to be pronouncing no better than a dream—at any rate, misgivings, sceptic and distracting; yet the heart the while, in spite of the uncertainty of the issue, remaining true to itself. If the spirit of the Albigensian warriors had really broken down, or if the poet had pointed his lesson so as to say, Truth is a lie; faith is folly; eat, drink, and die,—then his picture would have been revolting; but the noble spirit remains, though it is borne down and trifled with by destiny, and therefore it is not revolting but tragic.

Far different from this—as far inferior in tone to Lenau's lines, as it exceeds them in beauty of workmanship—is the well-known picture of the scene under the wall in the Siege of Corinth:

He saw the lean dogs beneath the wall
Hold o'er the dead their carnival;
Gorging and growling o'er carcass and limb;
They were too busy to bark at him!
From a Tartar's skull they had stripp'd the flesh,
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;
And their white tusks crunch'd o'er the whiter skull,
As it slipp'd through their jaws when their edge grew dull,
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed;
So well had they broken a lingering fast
With those who had fallen for that night's repast.
And Alp knew, by the turbans that roll'd on the sand,
The foremost of these were the best of his band:
. . . . . .
The scalps were in the wild dog's maw,
The hair was tangled round his jaw.
Close by the shore, on the edge of the gulf,
There sate a vulture flapping a wolf,
Who had stolen from the hills, but kept away,
Scared by the dogs, from the human prey;
But he seized on his share of a steed that lay,
Pick'd by the birds, on the sands of the bay.

For a parallel to the horribleness of this wonderfully painted scene we need not go to the Nibelungen, for we shall find nothing like it there: we must go back to the carved slabs which adorned the banquet halls of the Assyrian kings, where the foul birds hover over the stricken fields, and trail from their talons the entrails of the slain.

And for what purpose does Byron introduce these frightful images? Was it in contrast to the exquisite moonlight which tempts the renegade out of his tent? Was it to bring his mind into a fit condition to be worked upon by the vision of Francesca? It does but mar and untune the softening influences of nature,

which might have been rendered more powerful, perhaps, by some slight touch to remind him of his past day's work, but are blotted out and paralyzed by such a mass of horrors.

To go back to Homer.

We must omit for the present any notice of the domestic pictures, of which there are so many, in the palaces of Ulysses, of Nestor, or of Alcinous; of the games, so manly, yet, in point of refinement, so superior even to those of our own middle ages; of the supreme good of life as the Greeks conceived it, and of the arts by which they endeavoured to realize that good. It is useless to notice such things briefly, and the detail would expand into a volume. But the impression which we gather from them is the same which we have gathered all along—that if the proper aim of all human culture be to combine, in the highest measure in which they are compatible, the two elements of refinement and of manliness, then Homer's age was cultivated to a degree the like of which the earth has not witnessed since. There was more refinement under Pericles, as there is more in modern London and Paris; but there was, and there is, infinitely more vice. There was more fierceness (greater manliness there never was) in the times of feudalism. But take it for all in all, and in a mere human sense, apart from any other aspect of the world which is involved in Christianity, it is difficult to point to a time when life in general was happier, and the character of man set in a more noble form. If we have drawn the picture with too little

shadow, let it be allowed for. The shadow was there, doubtless, though we see it only in a few dark spots. The Margites would have supplied the rest, but the Margites, unhappily for us, is lost. Even heroes have their littlenesses, and Comedy is truer to the details of littleness than Tragedy or Epic. The grand is always more or less ideal, and the elevation of a moment is sublimed into the spirit of a life. Comedy, therefore, is essential for the representing of men; and there were times, doubtless, when the complexion of Agamemnon's greatness was discoloured, like Prince Henry's, by remembering, when he was weary, that poor creature—small beer—*i. e.* if the Greeks had got any.

A more serious discoloration, however, we are obliged to say that we find in Homer himself, in the soil or taint which even he is obliged to cast over the position of women. In the Iliad, where there is no sign of male slavery, women had already fallen under the chain, and though there does not seem to have been any practice of polygamy, the female prisoners fell, as a matter of course, into a more degraded position. It is painful, too, to observe that their own feelings followed the practice of the times, and that they composed themselves to bear without reluctance whatever their destiny forced upon them. When Priam ventured into the Grecian camp for Hector's body, and stood under the roof of Achilles, he endured to do what, as he says, no mortal father had ever yet endured —to give his hand to his son's destroyer. Briseis, whose bed was made desolate by the hand of the same

Achilles, finds it her one greatest consolation, that the conqueror stoops to choose her to share his own. And when Hector in his last sad parting scene anticipates a like fate for his own Andromache, it is not with the revolted agony of horror with which such a possible future would be regarded by a modern husband; nor does Andromache, however bitterly she feels the danger, protest, as a modern wife would do, that there was no fear for her—that death by sorrow's hand, or by her own, would preserve her to rejoin him.

Nor, again, was unfaithfulness, of however long duration, conclusively fatal against a wife; for we meet Helen, after a twenty years' elopement, again the quiet, hospitable mistress in the Spartan palace, entertaining her husband's guests with an easy matronly dignity, and not afraid even in Menelaus's presence to allude to the past—in strong terms of self-reproach, indeed, but with nothing like despairing prostration.

Making the worst of this, however, yet even in this respect the Homeric Greeks were better than their contemporaries in Palestine; and on the whole there was, perhaps, no time anterior to Christianity when women held a higher place, or the relation between wife and husband was of a more free and honourable kind.

For we have given but one side of the picture. When a woman can be the theme of a poet, her nature cannot be held in slight esteem; and there is no doubt that Penelope is Homer's heroine in the Odyssey. One design, at least, which Homer had before him was

to vindicate the character of the virtuous matron against the stain which Clytemnestra had inflicted on it. Clytemnestra has every advantage, Penelope every difficulty: the trial of the former lasted only half as long as that of the latter. Agamemnôn in leaving her gave herself and his house in charge to a divine ἀοιδός, a heaven-inspired prophet, who should stand between her and temptation, and whom she had to murder before her passion could have its way. Penelope had to bear up alone for twenty weary years, without a friend, without a counsellor, and with even a child whose constancy was wavering. It is obvious that Homer designed this contrast. The story of the Argos tragedy is told again and again. The shade of Agamemnon himself forebodes a fate like his own to Ulysses. It is Ulysses's first thought when he wakes from his sleep to find himself in his own land; and the scene in Hades, in the last book, seems only introduced that the husband of Clytemnestra may meet the shades of the Ithacan suitors, and learn, in their own tale of the sad issue of their wooing, how far otherwise it had fared with Ulysses than with himself. Women, therefore, according to Homer, were as capable of heroic virtue as men were, and the ideal of this heroism is one to which we have scarcely added.

For the rest, there is no trace of any oriental seraglio system. The sexes lived together in easy unaffected intercourse. The ladies appeared in society naturally and gracefully, and their chief occupations were household matters, care of clothes and linen, and

other domestic arrangements. When a guest came, they prepared his dressing-room, settled the bath, and laid out the conveniences of his toilet-table. In their leisure hours, they were to be found, as now, in the hall or the saloon, and their work-table contained pretty much the same materials. Helen was winding worsted as she entertained Telemachus, and Andromache worked roses in very modern cross-stitch. A literalist like Mr Mackay, who finds that the Israelites were cannibals, from such expressions as 'drinking the blood of the slain,' might discover, perhaps, a similar unpleasant propensity in an excited wish of Hecuba, that she might eat the heart of Achilles; but in the absence of other evidence, it is unwise in either case to press a metaphor; and the food of ladies, wherever Homer lets us see it, is very innocent cake and wine, with such fruits as were in season. To judge by Nausicaa, their breeding must have been exquisite. Nausicaa standing still, when the uncouth figure of Ulysses emerged from under the wood, all sea slime and nakedness, and only covered with a girdle of leaves—standing still to meet him when the other girls ran away tittering and terrified, is the perfect conception of true female modesty; and in the whole scene between them, Homer shows the most finished understanding of the delicate and tremulous relations which occur occasionally in the accidents of intercourse between highly cultivated men and women, and which he could only have learnt by living in a society where men and women met and felt in the way which he has described.

Who, then, was Homer? What was he? When did he live? History has absolutely nothing to answer. His poems were not written; for the art of writing (at any rate for a poet's purpose) was unknown to him. There is a vague tradition that the Iliad, and the Odyssey, and a comic poem called the Margites, were composed by an Ionian whose name was Homer, about four hundred years before Herodotus, or in the ninth century B.C. We know certainly that these poems were preserved by the Rhapsodists, or popular reciters, who repeated them at private parties or festivals, until writing came into use, and they were fixed in a less precarious form. A later story was current, that we owe the collection to Pisistratus; but an exclusive claim for him was probably only Athenian conceit. It is incredible that men of genius in Homer's own land —Alcæus, for instance—should have left such a work to be done by a foreigner. But this is really all which is known; and the creation of the poems lies in impenetrable mystery. Nothing remains to guide us, therefore, except internal evidence (strangely enough, it is the same with Shakespeare), and it has led to wild conclusions; yet the wildest is not without its use; it has commonly something to rest upon; and internal evidence is only really valuable when outward testimony has been sifted to the uttermost. The present opinion seems to be, that each poem is unquestionably the work of one man; but whether both poems are the work of the same is yet *sub judice*. The Greeks believed they were; and that is much. There are

remarkable points of resemblance in style, yet not greater than the resemblances in the 'Two Noble Kinsmen' and in the 'Yorkshire Tragedy' to 'Macbeth' and 'Hamlet;' and there are more remarkable points of non-resemblance, which deepen upon us the more we read. On the other hand, tradition is absolute. If the style of the Odyssey is sometimes unlike the Iliad, so is one part of the Iliad sometimes unlike another. It is hard to conceive a genius equal to the creation of either Iliad or Odyssey to have existed without leaving so much as a legend of his name; and the difficulty of criticizing style accurately in an old language will be appreciated by those who have tried their hand in their own language with the disputed plays of Shakespeare. There are heavy difficulties every way; and we shall best conclude our own subject by noting down briefly the most striking points of variation of which as yet no explanation has been attempted. We have already noticed several: the non-appearance of male slavery in the Iliad which is common in the Odyssey; the notion of a future state; and perhaps a fuller cultivation in the female character. Andromache is as delicate as Nausicaa, but she is not as grand as Penelope; and in marked contrast to the feeling expressed by Briseis, is the passage where the grief of Ulysses over the song of Demodocus is compared to the grief of a young wife flinging herself on the yet warm body of her husband, and looking forward to her impending slavery with feelings of horror and repulsion. But these are among the slightest points

in which the two poems are dissimilar. Not only are there slaves in the Odyssey, but there are θῆτες, or serfs, an order with which we are familiar in later times, but which again are not in the Iliad. In the Odyssey the Trojans are called ἐπιβήτορες ἵππων, which must mean *riders*. In the Iliad, horses are never ridden; they are always in harness.

Wherever in the Odyssey the Trojan war is alluded to (and it is very often), in no one case is the allusion to anything which is mentioned in the Iliad. We hear of the wooden horse, the taking of Troy, the death of Achilles, the contention of Ulysses with Ajax for his arms. It might be said that the poet wished to supply afterwards indirectly what he had left in the Iliad untold; but again, this is impossible, for a very curious reason. The Iliad opens with the wrath of Achilles, which caused such bitter woe to the Achaians. In the Odyssey it is still the wrath of Achilles; but singularly *not with Agamemnon, but with Ulysses.* Ulysses to the author of the Odyssey was a far grander person at *Troy* than he appears in the Iliad. In the latter poem he is great, but far from one of the greatest; in the other, he is evidently the next to Achilles; and it seems almost certain that whoever wrote the Odyssey was working from some other legend of the war. There were a thousand versions of it. The tale of Ilium was set to every lyre in Greece, and the relative position of the heroes was doubtless varied according to the sympathies or the patriotism of the singer. The character of Ulysses is much stronger in the Odyssey; and even

when the same qualities are attributed to him—his soft-flowing tongue, his cunning, and his eloquence—they are held in very different estimation. The Homer of the Iliad has little liking for a talker. Thersites is his pattern specimen of such; and it is the current scoff at unready warriors to praise their father's courage, and then to add—

ἀλλὰ τὸν υἱὸν
γείνατο εἷο χέρηα μάχῃ, ἀγορῇ δέ τ' ἀμείνω.

But the Phœacian Lord who ventured to reflect, in the Iliad style, on the supposed unreadiness of Ulysses, is taught a different notion of human excellence. Ulysses tells him that he is a fool. 'The gods,' Ulysses says, 'do not give all good things to all men, and often a man is made unfair to look upon, but over his ill favour they fling, like a garland, a power of lovely speech, and the people delight to *look* on him. He speaks with modest dignity, and he shines among the multitude. As he walks through the city, men gaze on him as on a god.'

Differences like these, however, are far from decisive. The very slightest external evidence would weigh them all down together. Perhaps the following may be of more importance:—

In both poems there are 'questionings of destiny,' as the modern phrase goes. The thing which we call human life is looked in the face—this little chequered island of lights and shadows, in the middle of an ocean of darkness; and in each we see the sort of answer which the poet finds for himself, and which might be summed up briefly in the last words of Ecclesiastes, 'Fear God,

and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.' But the world bears a different aspect, and the answer looks different in its application. In the Iliad, in spite of the gloom of Achilles, and his complaint of the double urn, the sense of life, on the whole, is sunny and cheerful. There is no yearning for anything beyond—nothing vague, nothing mystical. The earth, the men, the gods, have all a palpable reality about them. From first to last, we know where we are, and what we are about. In the Odyssey we are breathing another atmosphere. The speculations on the moral mysteries of our being hang like a mist over us from the beginning to the end; and the cloud from time to time descends on the actors and envelopes them with a preternatural halo. The poet evidently dislikes the expression of 'suffering being the lot of mortals,' as if it had been abused already for ungodly purposes. In the opening of the first book, Zeus reproves the folly of mortal men for casting the blame upon the gods when they themselves, in spite of all the gods can do to save them, persist in their own perverseness; and we never know as we go on, so fast we pass from one to the other, when we are among mere human beings, and when among the spiritual or the mystical. Those sea-nymphs, those cannibals, those enchantresses, if intended to be real, are neither mortal nor divine—at any rate, like nothing divine which we had seen in Olympus, or on the plains of Ilium; and at times there is a strangeness even in the hero himself. Sometimes it is Ulysses painfully toiling his way home across the unknown ocean;

sometimes it is we that are Ulysses, and that unknown ocean is the life across which we are wandering, with too many Circes, and Sirens, and 'Isles of Error' in our path. In the same spirit death is no longer the end; and on every side long vistas seem to stretch away into the infinite, peopled with shadowy forms.

But, as if this palpable initiation into the unseen were still insufficient or unconvincing, the common ground on which we are treading sometimes shakes under us, and we feel as Humboldt describes himself to have felt at the first shock of an earthquake. Strange pieces of mysterious wildness are let fall in our way, coming suddenly on us like spectres, and vanishing without explanation or hint of their purpose. What are those Phœacian ships meant for, which required neither sail nor oar, but of their own selves read the hearts of those they carried, and bore them wherever they would go?—or the wild end of the ship which carried Ulysses home?—or that terrible piece of second sight in the Hall at Ithaca, for which the seer was brought from Pylos?—or those islands, one of which is for ever wasting while another is born into being to complete the number?—or those mystical sheep and oxen, which knew neither age nor death, nor ever had offspring born to them, and whose flesh upon the spits began to crawl and bellow?—or Helen singing round the horse inside the Trojan walls, when every Grecian chief's heart fainted in him as he thought he heard the voice of his own dear wife far away beyond the sea?

In the far gates of the Lœstrygones, 'where such a

narrow rim of night divided day from day, that a man who needed not sleep might earn a double hire, and the cry of the shepherd at evening driving home his flock was heard by the shepherd going out in the morning to pasture,' we have, perhaps, some tale of a Phœnician mariner who had wandered into the North Seas, and seen 'the Norway sun set into sunrise.' But what shall we say to that Syrian isle, 'where disease is not, nor hunger, nor thirst, and where, when men grow old, Apollo comes with Artemis, and slays them with his silver bow?' There is nothing in the Iliad like any of these stories.

Yet, when all is said, it matters little who wrote the poems. Each is so magnificent, that to have written both could scarcely have increased the greatness of the man who had written one; and if there were two Homers, the earth is richer by one more divine-gifted man than we had known. After all, it is perhaps more easy to believe that the differences which we seem to see arise from Homer's own choice of the material which best suited two works so different, than that nature was so largely prodigal as to have created in one age and in one people two such men; for whether one or two, the authors of the Iliad and the Odyssey stand alone with Shakespeare far away above mankind.

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

1850.

IF the enormous undertaking of the Bollandist editors had been completed, it would have contained the histories of 25,000 saints. So many the Catholic Church acknowledged and accepted as her ideals—as men who had not only done her honour by the eminence of their sanctity, but who had received while on earth an openly Divine recognition of it in gifts of supernatural power. And this vast number is but a selection; the editors chose only out of the mass before them what was most noteworthy and trustworthy, and what was of catholic rather than of national interest. It is no more than a fraction of that singular mythology which for so many ages delighted the Christian world, which is still held in external reverence among the Romanists, and of which the modern historians, provoked by its feeble supernaturalism, and by the entire absence of critical ability among its writers to distinguish between fact

and fable, have hitherto failed to speak a reasonable word. Of the attempt in our own day to revive an interest in them we shall say little in this place. The 'Lives' have no form or beauty to give them attraction in themselves; and for their human interest the broad atmosphere of the world suited ill with these delicate plants, which had grown up under the shadow of the convent wall; they were exotics, not from another climate, but from another age; the breath of scorn fell on them, and having no root in the hearts and beliefs of men any more, but only in the sentimentalities and make-beliefs, they withered and sank. And yet, in their place as historical phenomena, the legends of the saints are as remarkable as any of the Pagan mythologies; to the full as remarkable, perhaps far more so, if the length and firmness of hold they once possessed on the convictions of mankind is to pass for anything in the estimate —and to ourselves they have a near and peculiar interest, as spiritual facts in the growth of the Catholic faith.

Philosophy has rescued the old theogonies from ridicule; their extravagancies, even the most grotesque of them, can be now seen to have their root in an idea, often a deep one, representing features of natural history or of metaphysical speculation, and we do not laugh at them any more. In their origin, they were the consecration of the first-fruits of knowledge; the expression of a real reverential belief. Then time did its work on them; knowledge grew, and they could not grow; they became monstrous and mischievous, and were driven out by Christianity with scorn and indignation. But

it is with human institutions as it is with men themselves; we are tender with the dead when their power to hurt us has passed away; and as Paganism can never more be dangerous, we have been able to command a calmer attitude towards it, and to detect under its most repulsive features sufficient latent elements of genuine thought to satisfy us that even in their darkest aberrations men are never wholly given over to falsehood and absurdity. When philosophy has done for mediæval mythology what it has done for Hesiod and for the Edda, we shall find there also at least as deep a sense of the awfulness and mystery of life, and we shall find a moral element which the Pagans never had. The lives of the saints are always simple, often childish, seldom beautiful; yet, as Goethe observed, if without beauty, they are always good.

And as a phenomenon, let us not deceive ourselves on the magnitude of the Christian hagiology. The Bollandists were restricted on many sides. They took only what was in Latin—while every country in Europe had its own home growth in its own language—and thus many of the most characteristic of the lives are not to be found at all in their collection. And again, they took but one life of each saint, composed in all cases late, and compiled out of the mass of various shorter lives which had grown up in different localities out of popular tradition; so that many of their longer productions have an elaborate literary character, with an appearance of artifice, which, till we know how they came into existence, might blind us to the vast width and

variety of the traditionary sources from which they are drawn. In the twelfth century there were sixty-six lives extant of St Patrick alone; and that in a country where every parish had its own special saint and special legend of him. These sixty-six lives may have contained (Mr Gibbon says *must* have contained) at least as many thousand lies. Perhaps so. To severe criticism, even the existence of a single apostle, St Patrick, appears problematical. But at least there is the historical fact, about which there can be no mistake, that the stories did grow up in some way or other, that they were repeated, sung, listened to, written, and read; that these lives in Ireland, and all over Europe and over the earth, wherever the Catholic faith was preached, stories like these, sprang out of the heart of the people, and grew and shadowed over the entire believing mind of the Catholic world. Wherever church was founded, or soil was consecrated for the long resting-place of those who had died in the faith; wherever the sweet bells of convent or of monastery were heard in the evening air, charming the unquiet world to rest and remembrance of God, there dwelt the memory of some apostle who had laid the first stone, there was the sepulchre of some martyr whose relics reposed beneath the altar, of some confessor who had suffered there for his Master's sake, of some holy ascetic who in silent self-chosen austerity had woven a ladder there of prayer and penance, on which the angels of God were believed to have ascended and descended. It is not a phenomenon of an age or of a century; it is characteristic of the history of

Christianity. From the time when the first preachers of the faith passed out from their homes by that quiet Galilean lake, to go to and fro over the earth, and did their mighty work, and at last disappeared and were not any more seen, these sacred legends began to grow. Those who had once known the Apostles, who had drawn from their lips the blessed message of light and life, one and all would gather together what fragments they could find of their stories. Rumours blew in from all the winds. They had been seen here, had been seen there, in the farthest corners of the earth, preaching, contending, suffering, prevailing. Affection did not stay to scrutinize. When some member of a family among ourselves is absent in some far place from which sure news of him comes slowly and uncertainly; if he has been in the army, or on some dangerous expedition, or at sea, or anywhere where real or imaginary dangers stimulate anxiety; or when one is gone away from us altogether—fallen perhaps in battle—and when the story of his end can be collected but fitfully from strangers, who only knew his name, but had heard him nobly spoken of; the faintest threads are caught at; reports, the vagueness of which might be evident to indifference, are to love strong grounds of confidence, and 'trifles light as air' establish themselves as certainties. So, in those first Christian communities, travellers came through from east and west; legions on the march, or caravans of wandering merchants; and one had been in Rome, and seen Peter disputing with Simon Magus; another in India, where he had heard St

Thomas preaching to the Brahmins; a third brought with him, from the wilds of Britain, a staff which he had cut, as he said, from a thorn tree, the seed of which St Joseph had sown there, and which had grown to its full size in a single night, making merchandise of the precious relic out of the credulity of the believers. So the legends grew, and were treasured up, and loved, and trusted; and alas! all which we have been able to do with them is to call them lies, and to point a shallow moral on the impostures and credulities of the early Catholics. An Atheist could not wish us to say more. If we can really believe that the Christian Church was made over in its very cradle to lies and to the father of lies, and was allowed to remain in his keeping, so to say, till yesterday, he will not much trouble himself with any faith which after such an admission we may profess to entertain. For, as this spirit began in the first age in which the Church began to have a history, so it continued so long as the Church as an integral body retained its vitality, and only died out in the degeneracy which preceded and which brought on the Reformation. For fourteen hundred years these stories held their place and rang on from age to age, from century to century; as the new faith widened its boundaries, and numbered ever more and more great names of men and women who had fought and died for it, so long their histories, living in the hearts of those for whom they laboured, laid hold of them and filled them; and the devout imagination, possessed with what was often no more than the rumour of a name, bodied

it out into life, and form, and reality. And doubtless, if we try them by any historical canon, we have to say that quite endless untruths grew in this way to be believed among men; and not believed only, but held sacred, passionately and devotedly; not filling the history books only, not only serving to amuse and edify the refectory, or to furnish matter for meditation in the cell, but claiming days for themselves of special remembrance, entering into liturgies and inspiring prayers, forming the spiritual nucleus of the hopes and fears of millions of human souls.

From the hard barren standing ground of the fact idolator, what a strange sight must be that still mountain-peak on the wild west Irish shore, where, for more than ten centuries, a rude old bell and a carved chip of oak have witnessed, or seemed to witness, to the presence long ago there of the Irish apostle; and where, in the sharp crystals of the trap rock, a path has been worn smooth by the bare feet and bleeding knees of the pilgrims, who still, in the August weather, drag their painful way along it as they have done for a thousand years! Doubtless the 'Lives of the Saints' are full of lies. Are there none in the Iliad? or in the legends of Æneas? Were the stories sung in the liturgy of Eleusis all so true? so true as fact? Are the songs of the Cid or of Siegfried true? We say nothing of the lies in these; but why? Oh, it will be said, but they are fictions; they were never supposed to be true. But they *were* supposed to be true, to the full as true as the 'Legenda Aurea.' Oh, then, they are poetry; and

besides they have nothing to do with Christianity. Yes, that is it; they have nothing to do with Christianity. Religion has grown such a solemn business with us, and we bring such long faces to it, that we cannot admit or conceive to be at all naturally admissible such a light companion as the imagination. The distinction between secular and religious has been extended even to the faculties; and we cannot tolerate in others the fulness and freedom which we have lost or rejected for ourselves. Yet it has been a fatal mistake with the critics. They found themselves off the recognized ground of Romance and Paganism, and they failed to see the same principles at work, though at work with new materials. In the records of all human affairs, it cannot be too often insisted on that two kinds of truth run for ever side by side, or rather, crossing in and out with each other, form the warp and the woof of the coloured web which we call history: the one, the literal and external truths corresponding to the eternal and as yet undiscovered laws of fact; the other, the truths of feeling and of thought, which embody themselves either in distorted pictures of outward things, or in some entirely new creation—sometimes moulding and shaping real history; sometimes taking the form of heroic biography, of tradition, or popular legend; sometimes appearing as recognized fiction in the epic, the drama, or the novel. It is useless to tell us that this is to confuse truth and falsehood. We are stating a fact, not a theory; and if it makes truth and falsehood difficult to distinguish, that is nature's fault, not ours

Fiction is only false, when it is false, not to fact, else how could it be fiction? but when it is—to *law*. To try it by its correspondence to the real is pedantry. Imagination creates as nature creates, by the force which is in man, which refuses to be restrained; we cannot help it, and we are only false when we make monsters, or when we pretend that our inventions are facts, when we substitute truths of one kind for truths of another; when we substitute,—and again we must say when we *intentionally* substitute:—whenever persons and whenever facts seize strongly on the imagination (and of course when there is anything remarkable in them they must and will do so), invention glides into the images which form in our minds; so it must be, and so it ever has been, from the first legends of a cosmogony to the written life of the great man who died last year or century, or to the latest scientific magazine. We cannot relate facts as they are; they must first pass through ourselves, and we are more or less than mortal if they gather nothing in the transit. The great outlines alone lie around us as imperative and constraining; the detail we each fill up variously, according to the turn of our sympathies, the extent of our knowledge, or our general theories of things: and therefore it may be said that the only literally true history possible is the history which mind has left of itself in all the changes through which it has passed.

Suetonius is to the full as extravagant and superstitious as Surius, and Suetonius was most laborious and careful, and was the friend of Tacitus and Pliny.

Suetonius gives us prodigies, where Surius has miracles, but that is all the difference; each follows the form of the supernatural which belonged to the genius of his age. Plutarch writes a life of Lycurgus, with details of his childhood, and of the trials and vicissitudes of his age; and the existence of Lycurgus is now quite as questionable as that of St Patrick or of St George of England.

No rectitude of intention will save us from mistakes. Sympathies and antipathies are but synonyms of prejudice, and indifference is impossible. Love is blind, and so is every other passion. Love believes eagerly what it desires; it excuses or passes lightly over blemishes, it dwells on what is beautiful; while dislike sees a tarnish on what is brightest, and deepens faults into vices. Do we believe that all this is a disease of unenlightened times, and that in our strong sunlight only truth can get received?—then let us contrast the portrait, for instance, of Sir Robert Peel as it is drawn in the Free Trade Hall at Manchester,[1] at the county meeting, and in the Oxford Common Room. It is not so Faithful and literal history is possible only to an impassive spirit. Man will never write it, until perfect knowledge and perfect faith in God shall enable him to see and endure every fact in its reality; until perfect love shall kindle in him under its touch the one just emotion which is in harmony with the eternal order of all things.

[1] Written in 1850.

How far we are in these days from approximating to such a combination we need not here insist. Criticism in the hands of men like Niebuhr seems to have accomplished great intellectual triumphs; and in Germany and France, and among ourselves, we have our new schools of the philosophy of history; yet their real successes have hitherto only been destructive. When philosophy reconstructs, it does nothing but project its own idea; when it throws off tradition, it cannot work without a theory: and what is a theory but an imperfect generalization caught up by a predisposition? What is Comte's great division of the eras but a theory, and facts are but as clay in his hands, which he can mould to illustrate it, as every clever man will find facts to be, let his theory be what it will? Intellect can destroy, but it cannot restore life; call in the creative faculties—call in Love, Idea, Imagination, and we have living figures, but we cannot tell whether they are figures which ever lived before. The high faith in which Love and Intellect can alone unite in their fulness, has not yet found utterance in modern historians.

The greatest man who has as yet given himself to the recording of human affairs is, beyond question, Cornelius Tacitus. Alone in Tacitus a serene calmness of insight was compatible with intensity of feeling. He took no side; he may have been Imperialist, he may have been Republican, but he has left no sign whether he was either: he appears to have sifted facts with scrupulous integrity; to administer his love, his scorn,

his hatred, according only to individual merit: and his sentiments are rather felt by the reader in the life-like clearness of his portraits, than expressed in words by himself. Yet such a power of seeing into things was only possible to him, because there was no party left with which he could determinedly side, and no wide spirit alive in Rome through which he could feel. The spirit of Rome, the spirit of life had gone away to seek other forms, and the world of Tacitus was a heap of decaying institutions; a stage where men and women, as they themselves were individually base or noble, played over their little parts. Life indeed was come into the world, was working in it, and silently shaping the old dead corpse into fresh and beautiful being. Tacitus alludes to it once only, in one brief scornful chapter; and the most poorly gifted of those forlorn biographers whose unreasoning credulity was piling up the legends of St Mary and the Apostles, which now drive the ecclesiastical historian to despair, knew more, in his divine hope and faith, of the real spirit which had gone out among mankind, than the keenest and gravest intellect which ever set itself to contemplate them.

And now having in some degree cleared the ground of difficulties, let us go back to the Lives of the Saints. If Bede tells us lies about St Cuthbert, we will disbelieve his stories; but we will not call Bede a liar, even though he prefaces his life with a declaration that he has set down nothing but what he has ascertained on the clearest evidence. We are driven to no such alternative; our canons of criticism are different from

Bede's, and so are our notions of probability. Bede would expect *à priori*, and would therefore consider as sufficiently attested by a consent of popular tradition, what the oaths of living witnesses would fail to make credible to a modern English jury. We will call Bede a liar only if he put forward his picture of St Cuthbert as a picture of a life which he considered admirable and excellent, as one after which he was endeavouring to model his own, and which he held up as a pattern of imitation, when in his heart he did not consider it admirable at all, when he was making no effort at the austerities which he was lauding. The histories of the saints are written as ideals of a Christian life; they have no elaborate and beautiful forms; single and straightforward as they are,—if they are not this they are nothing. For fourteen centuries the religious mind of the Catholic world threw them out as its form of hero worship, as the heroic patterns of a form of human life which each Christian within his own limits was endeavouring to realize. The first martyrs and confessors were to those poor monks what the first Dorian conquerors were in the war songs of Tyrtæus, what Achilles and Ajax and Agamemnon and Diomed were wherever Homer was sung or read; or in more modern times, what the Knights of the Round Table were in the halls of the Norman castles. The Catholic mind was expressing its conception of the highest human excellence; and the result is that immense and elaborate hagiology. As with the battle heroes, too, the inspiration lies in the universal idea; the varieties of character

(with here and there an exception) are slight and unimportant; the object being to create examples for universal human imitation. Lancelot or Tristram were equally true to the spirit of chivalry; and Patrick on the mountain, or Antony in the desert, are equal models of patient austerity. The knights fight with giants, enchanters, robbers, unknightly nobles, or furious wild beasts; the Christians fight with the world, the flesh, and the devil. The knight leaves the comforts of home in quest of adventures, the saint in quest of penance, and on the bare rocks or in desolate wildernesses subdues the devil in his flesh with prayers and penances; and so alien is it all to the whole thought and system of the modern Christian, that he either rejects such stories altogether as monks' impostures, or receives them with disdainful wonder, as one more shameful form of superstition with which human nature has insulted heaven and disgraced itself.

Leaving, however, for the present, the meaning of monastic asceticism, it seems necessary to insist that there really was such a thing; there is no doubt about it. If the particular actions told of each saint are not literally true as belonging to him, abundance of men did for many centuries lead the sort of life which saints are said to have led. We have got a notion that the friars were a snug, comfortable set, after all; and the life in a monastery pretty much like that in a modern university, where the old monks' language and affectation of unworldliness does somehow contrive to co-exist with as large a mass of bodily enjoyment as man's nature can

well appropriate. Very likely this was the state into which many of the monasteries had fallen in the fifteenth century. It was a symptom of a very rapid disorder which had set in among them, and which promptly terminated in dissolution. But long, long ages lay behind the fifteenth century, in which, wisely or foolishly, these old monks and hermits did make themselves a very hard life of it; and the legend only exceeded the reality in being a very slightly idealized portrait. We are not speaking of the miracles; that is a wholly different question. When men knew little of the order of nature, whatever came to pass without obvious cause was at once set down to influences beyond nature and above it; and so long as there were witches and enchanters, strong with the help of the bad powers, of course the especial servants of God would not be left without graces to outmatch and overcome the devil. And there were many other reasons why the saints should work miracles. They had done so under the old dispensation; and there was no obvious reason why Christians should be worse off than Jews. And again, although it be true, in the modern phrase, which is beginning to savour a little of cant, that the highest natural is the highest supernatural, nevertheless natural facts permit us to be so easily familiar with them, that they have an air of commonness; and when we have a vast idea to express, there is always a disposition to the extraordinary. But the miracles are not the chief thing; nor ever were they so. Men did not become saints by working miracles, but they worked

miracles because they had become saints; and the instructiveness and value of their lives lay in the means which they had used to make themselves what they were; and as we said, in this part of the business there is unquestionable basis of truth—scarcely even exaggeration. We have documentary evidence, which has been filtered through the sharp ordeal of party hatred, of the way in which some men (and those, not mere ignorant fanatics, but men of vast mind and vast influence in their days) conducted themselves, where *myth* has no room to enter. We know something of the hair-shirt of Thomas à Becket; and there was another poor monk, whose asceticism imagination could not easily outrun; he who, when the earth's mighty ones were banded together to crush him under their armed heels, spoke but one little word, and it fell among them like the spear of Cadmus; the strong ones turned their hands against each other, and the armies melted away; and the proudest monarch of the earth lay at that monk's threshold three winter nights in the scanty clothing of penance, suing miserably for forgiveness. Or again, to take a fairer figure. There is a poem extant, the genuineness of which, we believe, has not been challenged, composed by Columbkill, commonly called St Columba. He was a hermit in Arran, a rocky island in the Atlantic, outside Galway Bay; from which he was summoned, we do not know how, but in a manner which appeared to him to be a Divine call, to go away and be Bishop of Iona. The poem is a 'Farewell to Arran,' which he wrote on leaving it; and he lets us

see something of a hermit's life there. 'Farewell,' he begins (we are obliged to quote from memory), 'a long farewell to thee, Arran of my heart. Paradise is with thee; the garden of God within the sound of thy bells. The angels love Arran. Each day an angel comes there to join in its services.' And then he goes on to describe his 'dear cell,' and the holy happy hours which he had spent there, 'with the wind whistling through the loose stones, and the sea spray hanging on his hair.' Arran is no better than a wild rock. It is strewed over with the ruins which may still be seen of the old hermitages; and at their best they could have been but such places as sheep would huddle under in a storm, and shiver in the cold and wet which would pierce through the chinks of the walls.

Or, if written evidence be too untrustworthy, there are silent witnesses which cannot lie, that tell the same touching story. Whoever loiters among the ruins of a monastery will see, commonly leading out of the cloisters, rows of cellars half under-ground, low, damp, and wretched-looking; an earthen floor, bearing no trace of pavement; a roof from which the mortar and the damp keep up (and always must have kept up) a perpetual ooze; for a window a narrow slip in the wall, through which the cold and the wind find as free an access as the light. Such as they are, a well-kept dog would object to accept a night's lodging in them; and if they had been prison cells, thousands of philanthropic tongues would have trumpeted out their horrors. The stranger perhaps supposes that they were the very dun-

geons of which he has heard such terrible things. He asks his guide, and his guide tells him they were the monks' dormitories. Yes; there on that wet soil, with that dripping roof above them, was the self-chosen home of those poor men. Through winter frost, through rain and storm, through summer sunshine, generation after generation of them, there they lived and prayed, and at last lay down and died.

It is all gone now—gone as if it had never been; and it was as foolish as, if the attempt had succeeded, it would have been mischievous, to revive a devotional interest in the Lives of the Saints. It would have produced but one more unreality in an age already too full of such. No one supposes we should have set to work to live as they lived; that any man, however earnest in his religion, would have gone looking for earth floors and wet dungeons, or wild islands to live in, when he could get anything better. Either we are wiser, or more humane, or more self-indulgent; at any rate we are something which divides us from mediæval Christianity by an impassable gulf which this age or this epoch will not see bridged over. Nevertheless, these modern hagiologists, however wrongly they went to work at it, had detected, and were endeavouring to fill, a very serious blank in our educational system; a very serious blank indeed, and one which, somehow, we must contrive to get filled if the education of character is ever to be more than a name with us. To try and teach people how to live without giving them examples in which our rules are illustrated, is like teaching them

to draw by the rules of perspective, and of light and shade, without designs in which to study the effects; or to write verse by the laws of rhyme and metre, without song or poem in which rhyme and metre are exhibited. It is a principle which we have forgotten, and it is one which the old Catholics did not forget. We do not mean that they set out with saying to themselves, 'We must have examples, we must have ideals;' very likely they never thought about it at all; love for their holy men, and a thirst to know about them, produced the histories; and love unconsciously working gave them the best for which they could have wished. The boy at school at the monastery, the young monk disciplining himself as yet with difficulty under the austerities to which he had devoted himself, the old one halting on toward the close of his pilgrimage,—all of them had before their eyes, in the legend of the patron saint, a personal realization of all they were trying after; leading them on, beckoning to them, and pointing, as they stumbled among their difficulties, to the marks which his own footsteps had left, as he had trod that hard path before them. It was as if the Church was for ever saying to them:—'You have doubts and fears, and trials and temptations, outward and inward; you have sinned, perhaps, and feel the burden of your sin. Here was one who, like you, *in this very spot*, under the same sky, treading the same soil, among the same hills and woods and rocks and rivers, was tried like you, tempted like you, sinned like you; but here he prayed, and persevered, and did penance, and washed out his sins;

he fought the fight, he vanquished the Evil One, he triumphed, and now he reigns a saint with Christ in heaven. The same ground which yields you your food, once supplied him; he breathed, and lived, and felt, and died *here;* and now, from his throne in the sky, he is still looking lovingly down on his children, making intercession for you that you may have grace to follow him, that by-and-by he may himself offer you at God's throne as his own.' It is impossible to measure the influence which a personal reality of this kind must have exercised on the mind, thus daily and hourly impressed upon it through a life; there is nothing vague any more, no abstract excellences to strain after; all is distinct, personal, palpable. It is no dream. The saint's bones are under the altar; nay, perhaps, his very form and features undissolved. Under some late abbot the coffin may have been opened and the body seen without mark or taint of decay. Such things have been, and the emaciation of a saint will account for it without a miracle. Daily some incident of his story is read aloud, or spoken of, or preached upon. In quaint beautiful forms it lives in light in the long chapel windows; and in the summer matins his figure, lighted up in splendour, gleams down on the congregation as they pray, or streams in mysterious tints along the pavement, clad, as it seems, in soft celestial glory, and shining as he shines in heaven. Alas, alas! where is it all gone?

We are going to venture a few thoughts on the wide question, what possibly may have been the mean-

ing of so large a portion of the human race, and so many centuries of Christianity, having been surrendered and seemingly sacrificed to the working out this dreary asceticism. If right once, then it is right now; if now worthless, then it could never have been more than worthless; and the energies which spent themselves on it were like corn sown upon the rock, or substance given for that which is not bread. We supposed ourselves challenged recently for our facts. Here is an enormous fact which there is no evading. It is not to be slurred over with indolent generalities, with unmeaning talk of superstition, of the twilight of the understanding, of barbarism, and of nursery credulity; it is matter for the philosophy of history, if the philosophy has yet been born which can deal with it; one of the solid, experienced facts in the story of mankind which must be accepted and considered with that respectful deference which all facts claim of their several sciences, and which will certainly not disclose its meaning (supposing it to have a meaning) except to reverence, to sympathy, to love. We must remember that the men who wrote these stories, and who practised these austerities, were the same men who composed our liturgies, who built our churches and our cathedrals—and the gothic cathedral is, perhaps, on the whole, the most magnificent creation which the mind of man has as yet thrown out of itself. If there be any such thing as a philosophy of history, real or possible, it is in virtue of there being certain progressive organizing laws in which the fretful lives of each of us are gathered into

and subordinated in some larger unity, through which age is linked to age, as we move forward, with an horizon expanding and advancing. And if this is true, the magnitude of any human phenomenon is a criterion of its importance, and definite forms of thought working through long historic periods imply an effect of one of these vast laws—imply a distinct step in human progress. Something previously unrealized is being lived out, and rooted into the heart of mankind.

Nature never half does her work. She goes over it, and over it, to make assurance sure, and makes good her ground with wearying repetition. A single section of a short paper is but a small space to enter on so vast an enterprise; nevertheless, a few very general words shall be ventured as a suggestion of what this monastic or saintly spirit may possibly have meant.

First, as the spirit of Christianity is antagonistic to the world, whatever form the spirit of the world assumes, the ideals of Christianity will of course be their opposite; as one verges into one extreme, the other will verge into the contrary. In those rough times the law was the sword; animal might of arm, and the strong animal heart which guided it, were the excellences which the world rewarded; and monasticism, therefore, in its position of protest, would be the destruction and abnegation of the animal nature. The war hero in the battle or the tourney yard might be taken as the apotheosis of the fleshly man—the saint in the desert of the spiritual.

But this interpretation is slight, imperfect, and if

true at all only partially so. The animal and the spiritual are not contradictories; they are the complements in the perfect character; and in the middle ages, as in all ages of genuine earnestness, they interfused and penetrated each other. There were warrior saints, and saintly warriors; and those grand old figures which sleep cross-legged in the cathedral aisles were something higher than only one more form of the beast of prey. Monasticism represented something more positive than a protest against the world. We believe it to have been the realization of the infinite loveliness and beauty of personal purity.

In the earlier civilization, the Greeks, however genuine their reverence for the gods, do not seem to have supposed any part of their duty to the gods to consist in keeping their bodies untainted. Exquisite as was their sense of beauty, of beauty of mind as well as beauty of form, with all their loftiness and their nobleness, with their ready love of moral excellence when manifested, as fortitude, or devotion to liberty and to home, they had little or no idea of what we mean by morality. With a few rare exceptions, pollution, too detestable to be even named among ourselves, was of familiar and daily occurrence among their greatest men; was no reproach to philosopher or to statesman; and was not supposed to be incompatible, and was not, in fact, incompatible with any of those especial excellences which we so admire in the Greek character.

Among the Romans (that is, the early Romans of

the republic), there was a sufficiently austere morality. A public officer of state, whose business was to inquire into the private lives of the citizens, and to punish offences against morals, is a phenomenon which we have seen only once on this planet. There was never a nation before, and there has been none since, with sufficient virtue to endure it. But the Roman morality was not lovely for its own sake, nor excellent in itself. It was obedience to law, practised and valued, loved for what resulted from it, for the strength and rigid endurance which it gave, but not loved for itself. The Roman nature was fierce, rugged, almost brutal; and it submitted to restraint as stern as itself, as long as the energy of the old spirit endured. But as soon as that energy grew slack—when the religion was no longer believed, and taste, as it was called, came in, and there was no more danger to face, and the world was at their feet, all was swept away as before a whirlwind; there was no loveliness in virtue to make it desired, and the Rome of the Cæsars presents, in its later ages, a picture of enormous sensuality, of the coarsest animal desire, with means unlimited to gratify it. In Latin literature, as little as in the Greek, is there any sense of the beauty of purity. Moral essays on temperance we may find, and praise enough of the wise man whose passions and whose appetites are trained into obedience to reason. But this is no more than the philosophy of the old Roman life, which got itself expressed in words when men were tired of the reality. It involves no sense of sin. If sin could be

indulged without weakening self-command, or without hurting other people, Roman philosophy would have nothing to say against it.

The Christians stepped far out beyond philosophy. Without speculating on the *why*, they felt that indulgence of animal passion did, in fact, pollute them, and so much the more, the more it was deliberate. Philosophy, gliding into Manicheism, divided the forces of the universe, giving the spirit to God, but declaring matter to be eternally and incurably evil; and looking forward to the time when the spirit should be emancipated from the body, as the beginning of, or as the return to, its proper existence, a man like Plotinus took no especial care what became the meanwhile of its evil tenement of flesh. If the body sinned, sin was its element; it could not do other than sin; purity of conduct could not make the body clean, and no amount of bodily indulgence could shed a taint upon the spirit—a very comfortable doctrine, and one which, under various disguises, has appeared a good many times on the earth. But Christianity, shaking all this off, would present the body to God as a pure and holy sacrifice, as so much of the material world conquered from the appetites and lusts, and from the devil whose abode they were. This was the meaning of the fastings and scourgings, the penances and night-watchings; it was this which sent St Anthony to the tombs and set Simeon on his pillar, to conquer the devil in the flesh, and keep themselves, if possible, undefiled by so much as one corrupt thought.

And they may have been absurd and extravagant. When the feeling is stronger than the judgment, men are very apt to be extravagant. If, in the recoil from Manicheism, they conceived that a body of a saint thus purified had contracted supernatural virtue and could work miracles, they had not sufficiently attended to the facts, and so far are not unexceptionable witnesses to them. Nevertheless they did their work, and in virtue of it we are raised to a higher stage—we are lifted forward a mighty step which we can never again retrace. Personal purity is not the whole for which we have to care: it is but one feature in the ideal character of man. The monks may have thought it was all, or more nearly all than it is; and therefore their lives may seem to us poor, mean, and emasculate. Yet it is with life as it is with science; generations of men have given themselves exclusively to single branches, which, when mastered, form but a little section in a cosmic philosophy; and in life, so slow is progress, it may take a thousand years to make good a single step. Weary and tedious enough it seems when we cease to speak in large language, and remember the numbers of individual souls who have been at work at the process; but who knows whereabouts we are in the duration of the race? Is humanity crawling out of the cradle, or tottering into the grave? Is it in nursery, in schoolroom, or in opening manhood? Who knows? It is enough for us to be sure of our steps when we have taken them, and thankfully to accept what has been done for us. Henceforth it is impossible for us to give our unmixed admiration to any

character which moral shadows overhang. Henceforth we require, not greatness only, but goodness; and not that goodness only which begins and ends in conduct correctly regulated, but that love of goodness, that keen pure feeling for it, which resides in a conscience as sensitive and susceptible as woman's modesty.

So much for what seems to us the philosophy of this matter. If we are right, it is no more than a first furrow in the crust of a soil which hitherto the historians have been contented to leave in its barrenness. If they are conscientious enough not to trifle with the facts, as they look back on them from the luxurious self-indulgence of modern Christianity, they either revile the superstition or pity the ignorance which made such large mistakes on the nature of religion—and, loud in their denunciations of priestcraft and of lying wonders, they point their moral with pictures of the ambition of mediæval prelacy or the scandals of the annals of the Papacy. For the inner life of all those millions of immortal souls who were struggling, with such good or bad success as was given them, to carry Christ's cross along their journey through life, they set it by, pass it over, dismiss it out of history, with some poor commonplace simper of sorrow or of scorn. It will not do. Mankind have not been so long on this planet altogether, that we can allow so large a chasm to be scooped out of their spiritual existence.

We intended to leave our readers with something lighter than all this in the shape of literary criticism, and a few specimens of the biographical style; in both

of these we must now, however, be necessarily brief. Whoever is curious to study the lives of the saints in their originals, should rather go anywhere than to the Bollandists, and universally never read a late life when he can command an early one; for the genius in them is in the ratio of their antiquity, and, like river-water, is most pure nearest to the fountain. We are lucky in possessing several specimens of the mode of their growth in late and early lives of the same saints, and the process in all is similar. Out of the unnumbered lives of St Bride, three are left; out of the sixty-six of St Patrick, there are eight; the first of each belonging to the sixth century, the latest to the thirteenth. The earliest in each instance are in verse; they belong to a time when there was no one to write such things, and were popular in form and popular in their origin. The flow is easy, the style graceful and natural; but the step from poetry to prose is substantial as well as formal; the imagination is ossified, and we exchange the exuberance of legendary creativeness for the dogmatic record of fact without reality, and fiction without grace. The marvellous in the poetical lives is comparatively slight; the after-miracles being composed frequently out of a mistake of poets' metaphors for literal truth. There is often real, genial, human beauty in the old verse. The first two stanzas, for instance, of St Bride's Hymn are of high merit, as may, perhaps, be imperfectly seen in a translation:—

> Bride the queen, she loved not the world;
> She floated on the waves of the world
> As the sea-bird floats upon the billow.

Such sleep she slept as the mother sleeps
In the far land of her captivity,
Mourning for her child at home.

What a picture is there of the strangeness and yearning of the poor human soul in this earthly pilgrimage!

The poetical 'Life of St Patrick,' too, is full of fine, wild, natural imagery. The boy is described as a shepherd on the hills of Down, and there is a legend, well told, of the angel Victor coming to him, and leaving a gigantic foot-print on a rock from which he sprang back into heaven. The legend, of course, rose from some remarkable natural feature of the spot; as it is first told, a shadowy unreality hangs over it, and it is doubtful whether it is more than a vision of the boy; but in the later prose all is crystalline; the story is drawn out, with a barren prolixity of detail, into a series of angelic visitations. And again, when Patrick is described, as the after-apostle, raising the dead Celts to life, the metaphor cannot be left in its natural force, and we have a long weary list of literal deaths and literal raisings. So in many ways the freshness and individuality was lost with time. The larger saints swallowed up the smaller and appropriated their exploits; chasms were supplied by an ever-ready fancy; and, like the stock of good works laid up for general use, there was a stock of miracles ever ready when any defect was to be supplied. So it was that, after the first impulse, the progressive life of a saint rolled on like a snowball down a mountain-side, gathering up

into itself whatever lay in its path, fact or legend, appropriate or inappropriate—sometimes real jewels of genuine old tradition, sometimes the débris of the old creeds and legends of heathenism; and on, and on, till at length it reached the bottom, and was dashed in pieces on the Reformation.

One more illustration shall serve as evidence of what the really greatest, most vigorous, minds in the twelfth century could accept as possible or probable, which they could relate (on what evidence we do not know) as really ascertained facts. We remember something of St Anselm: both as a statesman and as a theologian, he was unquestionably among the ablest men of his time alive in Europe. Here is a story which Anselm tells of a certain Cornish St Kieran. The saint, with thirty of his companions, was preaching within the frontiers of a lawless Pagan prince; and, disregarding all orders to be quiet or to leave the country, continued to agitate, to threaten, and to thunder even in the ears of the prince himself. Things took their natural course. Disobedience provoked punishment. A guard of soldiers was sent, and the saint and his little band were decapitated. The scene of the execution was a wood, and the heads and trunks were left lying there for the wolves and the wild birds.

But now a miracle, such as was once heard of before in the Church in the person of the holy Denis, was again wrought by Divine Providence to preserve the bodies of these saints from profanation. The trunk of Kieran rose from the ground, and selecting first his own head, and carrying it to a stream, and there carefully washing it, and afterwards performing the same sacred office for each

of his companions, giving each body its own head, he dug graves for them and buried them, and last of all buried himself.

It is even so. So it stands written in a life claiming Anselm's authorship; and there is no reason why the authorship should not be his. Out of the heart come the issues of evil and of good, and not out of the intellect or the understanding. Men are not good or bad, noble or base—thank God for it!—as they judge well or ill of the probabilities of nature, but as they love God and hate the devil. And yet the story is instructive. We have heard grave good men—men of intellect and influence—with all the advantages of modern science, learning, experience; men who would regard Anselm with sad and serious pity; yet tell us stories, as having fallen within their own experience, of the marvels of mesmerism, to the full as ridiculous (if anything is ridiculous) as this of the poor decapitated Kieran.

Mutato nomine, de te
Fabula narratur.

We see our natural faces in the glass of history, and turn away and straightway forget what manner of men we are. The superstition of science scoffs at the superstition of faith.

REPRESENTATIVE MEN.

1850.

FROM St Anselm to Mr Emerson, from the 'Acta Sanctorum' to the 'Representative Men;' so far in seven centuries we have travelled. The races of the old Ideals have become extinct like the Preadamite Saurians; and here are our new pattern specimens on which we are to look, and take comfort and encouragement to ourselves.

The philosopher, the mystic, the poet, the sceptic, the man of the world, the writer; these are the present moral categories, the *summa genera* of human greatness as Mr Emerson arranges them. From every point of view an exceptionable catalogue. They are all thinkers, to begin with, except one: and thought is but a poor business compared to action. Saints did not earn canonization by the number of their folios; and if the necessities of the times are now driving our best men out of action into philosophy and verse-making, so

much the worse for them and so much the worse for the world. The one pattern actor, 'the man of the world,' is Napoleon Bonaparte, not in the least a person, as we are most of us at present feeling, whose example the world desires to see followed. Mr Emerson would have done better if he had kept to his own side of the Atlantic. He is paying his own countrymen but a poor compliment by coming exclusively to Europe for his heroes; and he would be doing us in Europe more real good by a great deal if he would tell us something of the backwoodsmen in Kentucky and Ohio. However, to let that pass; it is not our business here to quarrel either with him or his book; and the book stands at the head of our article rather because it presents a very noticeable deficiency of which its writer is either unaware or careless.

These six predicables, as the logician would call them, what are they? Are they *ultimate genera* refusing to be classified further? or is there any other larger type of greatness under which they fall? In the naturalist's catalogue, poet, sceptic, and the rest will all be classified as men—man being an intelligible entity. Has Mr Emerson any similar clear idea of great man or good man? If so, where is he? what is he? It is desirable that we should know. Men will not get to heaven because they lie under one or other of these predicables. What is that supreme type of character which is in itself good or great, unqualified with any further *differentia?* Is there any such? and if there be, where is the representative of this? It

may be said that the generic man exists nowhere in an ideal unity—that if considered at all, he must be abstracted from the various sorts of men, black and white, tame or savage. So if we would know what a great man or a good man means, we must look to some specific line in which he is good, and abstract our general idea. And that is very well, provided we know what we are about; provided we understand, in our abstracting, how to get the essential idea distinctly out before ourselves, without entangling ourselves in the accidents. Human excellence, after all the teaching of the last eighteen hundred years, ought to be something palpable by this time. It is the one thing which we are all taught to seek and to aim at forming in ourselves; and if representative men are good for anything at all, it can only be, not as they represent merely curious combinations of phenomena, but as they illustrate us in a completely realized form, what we are, every single one of us, equally interested in understanding. It is not the 'great man' as 'man of the world' that we care for, but the 'man of the world' as a 'great man'—which is a very different thing. Having to live in this world, how to live greatly here is the question for us; not, how, being great, we can cast our greatness in a worldly mould. There may be endless successful 'men of the world' who are mean or little enough all the while; and the Emersonian attitude will confuse success with greatness, or turn our ethics into a chaos of absurdity. So it is with everything which man undertakes and works in. Life has

grown complicated; and for one employment in old times there are a hundred now. But it is not *they* which are anything, but *we*. We are the end, they are but the means, the material—like the clay, or the marble, or the bronze, in which the sculptor carves his statue. The *form* is everything; and what is the form? From nursery to pulpit every teacher rings on the one note—be good, be noble, be men. What is goodness then? and what is nobleness? and where are the examples? We do not say that there are none. God forbid! That is not what we are meaning at all. If the earth had ceased to bear men pleasant in God's sight, it would have passed away like the cities in the plain. But who are they? which are they? how are we to know them? They are our leaders in this life-campaign of ours. If we could see them, we would follow them, and save ourselves many and many a fall, and many an enemy whom we could have avoided, if we had known of him. It cannot be that the thing is so simple, when names of highest reputation are wrangled over, and such poor counterfeits are mobbed with applauding followers. In art and science we can detect the charlatan, but in life we do not recognize him so readily—we do not recognize the charlatan, and we do not recognize the true man. Rajah Brooke is alternately a hero or a pirate; and fifty of the best men among us are likely to have fifty opinions on the merits of Elizabeth or Cromwell.

But surely, men say, the thing is simple. The commandments are simple. It is not that people do

not know, but that they will not act up to what they know. We hear a great deal of this in sermons, and elsewhere; and of course, as everybody's experience will tell him, there is a great deal too much reason why we should hear of it. But there are two sorts of duty, positive and negative; what we ought to do, and what we ought not to do. To the latter of these, conscience is pretty much awake; but by cunningly concentrating its attention on one side of the matter, conscience has contrived to forget altogether that any other sort exists at all. 'Doing wrong' is breaking a commandment which forbids us to do some particular thing. That is all the notion which in common language is attached to the idea. Do not kill, steal, lie, swear, commit adultery, or break the Lord's day—these are the commandments; very simple, doubtless, and easy to be known. But, after all, what are they? They are no more than the very first and rudimental conditions of goodness. Obedience to these is not more than a small part of what is required, of us; it is no more than the foundation on which the superstructure of character is to be raised. To go through life, and plead at the end of it that we have not broken any of these commandments, is but what the unprofitable servant did, who kept his talent carefully unspent, and yet was sent to outer darkness for his uselessness. Suppose these commandments obeyed—what then? It is but a small portion of our time which, we will hope, is spent in resisting temptation to break them. What are we to do with the rest of it? Or suppose them

(and this is a high step indeed) resolved into love of God and love of our neighbour. Suppose we know that it is our duty to love our neighbour as ourselves. What are we to do, then, for our neighbour, besides abstaining from doing him injury? The saints knew very well what *they* were to do; but our duties, we suppose, lie in a different direction; and it does not appear that we have found them. 'We have duties so positive to our neighbour,' says Bishop Butler, 'that if we give more of our time and of our attention to ourselves and our own matters than is our just due, we are taking what is not ours, and are guilty of fraud.' What does Bishop Butler mean? It is easy to answer generally. In detail, it is not only difficult, it is impossible to answer at all. The modern world says—'Mind your own business, and leave others to take care of theirs;' and whoever among us aspires to more than the negative abstaining from wrong, is left to his own guidance. There is no help for him, no instruction, no modern ideal which shall be to him what the heroes were to the young Greek or Roman, or the martyrs to the Middle-Age Christian. There is neither track nor footprint in the course which he will have to follow, while, as in the old fairy tale, the hill-side which he is climbing is strewed with black stones mocking at him with their thousand voices. We have no moral criterion, no idea, no counsels of perfection; and surely this is the reason why education is so little prosperous with us; because the only education worth anything is the education of character, and we cannot educate a

character unless we have some notion of what we would form. Young men, as we know, are more easily led than driven. It is a very old story that to forbid this and that (so curious and contradictory is our nature), is to stimulate a desire to do it. But place before a boy a figure of a noble man; let the circumstances in which he has earned his claim to be called noble be such as the boy himself sees round himself; let him see this man rising over his temptation, and following life victoriously and beautifully forward, and, depend on it, you will kindle his heart as no threat of punishment here or anywhere will kindle it.

People complain of the sameness in the 'Lives of the Saints.' It is that very sameness which is the secret of their excellence. There is a sameness in the heroes of the 'Iliad;' there is a sameness in the historical heroes of Greece and Rome. A man is great as he contends best with the circumstances of his age, and those who fight best with the same circumstances, of course grow like each other. And so with our own age—if we really could have the lives of our best men written for us (and written well, by men who knew what to look for, and what it was on which they should insist), they would be just as like each other too, and would for that reason be of such infinite usefulness. They would not be like the old Ideals. Times are changed; they were one thing, we have to be another —their enemies are not ours. There is a moral metempsychosis in the change of era, and probably no lineament of form or feature remains identical; yet

surely, not because less is demanded of us—not less, but more—more, as we are again and again told on Sundays from the pulpits; if the preachers would but tell us in what that 'more' consists. The loftiest teaching we ever hear is, that we are to work in the spirit of love; but we are still left to generalities, while action divides and divides into ever smaller details. It is as if the Church said to the painter or to the musician whom she was training, you must work in the spirit of love and in the spirit of truth; and then adding, that the Catholic painting or the Catholic music was what he was *not* to imitate, suppose that she had sent him out into the world equipped fully for his enterprise.

And what comes of this? Emersonianism has come, modern hagiology has come, and Ainsworth novels and Bulwer novels, and a thousand more unclean spirits. We have cast out the Catholic devil, and the Puritan has swept the house and garnished it; but as yet we do not see any symptoms showing of a healthy incoming tenant, and there may be worse states than Catholicism. If we wanted proof of the utter spiritual disintegration into which we have fallen, it would be enough that we have no biographies. We do not mean that we have no written lives of our fellow-creatures; there are enough and to spare. But not any one is there in which the ideal tendencies of this age can be discerned in their true form; not one, or hardly any one, which we could place in a young man's hands, with such warm confidence as would let us say of it—'Read that; there is a man—such a man as you

ought to be; read it, meditate on it; see what he was, and how he made himself what he was, and try and be yourself like him.' This, as we saw lately, is what Catholicism did. It had its one broad type of perfection, which in countless thousands of instances was perpetually reproducing itself—a type of character not especially belonging to any one profession; it was a type to which priest or layman, knight or bishop, king or peasant, might equally aspire: men of all sorts aspired to it, and men of all sorts attained to it; and as fast as she had realized them (so to say), the Church took them in her arms, and held them up before the world as fresh and fresh examples of victory over the devil. This is what that Church was able to do, and it is what we cannot do; and yet, till we can learn to do it, no education which we can offer has any chance of prospering. Perfection is not easy; it is of all things most difficult; difficult to know and difficult to practise. Rules of life will not do; even if our analysis of life in all its possible forms were as complete as it is in fact rudimentary, they would still be inefficient. The philosophy of the thing might be understood, but the practice would be as far off as ever. In life, as in art, and as in mechanics, the only profitable teaching is the teaching by example. Your mathematician, or your man of science, may discourse excellently on the steam engine, yet he cannot make one; he cannot make a bolt or a screw. The master workman in the engine-room does not teach his apprentice the theory of expansion, or of atmospheric

pressure; he guides his hand upon the turncock, he practises his eye upon the index, and he leaves the science to follow when the practice has become mechanical. So it is with everything which man learns to do; and yet for the art of arts, the trade of trades, for *life*, we content ourselves with teaching our children the catechism and the commandments; we preach them sermons on the good of being good, and the evil of being evil; in our higher education we advance to the theory of habit and the freedom of the will; and then, when failure follows failure, *ipsa experientia reclamante*, we hug ourselves with a complacent self-satisfied reflection that the fault is not ours, that all which men could do we have done. The freedom of the will!—as if a blacksmith would ever teach a boy to make a horseshoe, by telling him he could make one if he chose.

In setting out on our journey through life, we are like strangers set to find their way across a difficult and entangled country. It is not enough for us to know that others have set out as we set out, that others have faced the lions in the path and overcome them, and have arrived at last at the journey's end. Such a knowledge may give us heart—but the help it gives is nothing beyond teaching us that the difficulties are not insuperable. It is the *track*, which these others, these pioneers of godliness, have beaten in, that we cry to have shown us; not a mythic 'Pilgrim's Progress,' but a real path trodden in by real men. Here is a crag, and there is but one spot where it can be climbed;

here is a morass or a river, and there is a bridge in one place, and a ford in another. There are robbers in this forest, and wild beasts in that; the tracks cross and recross, and, as in the old labyrinth, only one will bring us right. The age of the saints has passed; they are no longer any service to us; we must walk in their spirit, but not along their road; and in this sense we say, that we have no pattern great men, no biographies, no history, which are of real service to us. It is the remarkable characteristic of the present time, as far as we know—a new phenomenon since history began to be written; one more proof, if we wanted proof, that we are entering on another era. In our present efforts at educating, we are like workmen setting about to make a machine which they know is to be composed of plates and joints, and wheels and screws and springs:—they temper their springs, and smooth their plates, and carve out carefully their wheels and screws, but having no idea of the machine in its combination, they either fasten them together at random, and create some monster of disjointed undirected force, or else pile the finished materials into a heap together, and trust to some organic spirit in themselves which will shape them into unity. We do not know what we would be at. Make our children into men, says one. But what sort of men? The Greeks were men, so were the Jews, so were the Romans, so were the old Saxons, the Normans, the Duke of Alva's Spaniards, and Cromwell's Puritans. These were all men, and strong men too; yet all different, and all differently trained. 'Into

Christian men,' say others. But the saints were Christian men; yet the modern Englishmen have been offered the saints' biographies, and have with sufficient clearness expressed their opinion of them.

Alas! in all this confusion, only those keen-eyed children of this world find their profit; their idea does not readily forsake them. In their substantial theory of life, the business of man in it is to get on, to thrive, to prosper, to have riches in possession. They will have their little ones taught, by the law of demand, what will fetch its price in the market; and this is clear, bold, definite, straightforward—and therefore it is strong, and works its way. It works and will prevail for a time; for a time—but not for ever, unless indeed religion be all a dream, and our airy notions of ourselves a vision out of which our wise age is the long-waited-for awakening.

It would be a weary and odious business to follow out all the causes which have combined to bring us into our present state. Many of them lie deep down in the roots of humanity, and many belong to that large system of moral causation which works through vast masses of mankind—which, impressing peculiar and necessary features on the eras as they succeed, leaves individuals but a limited margin within which they may determine what they will be. One cause, however, may be mentioned, which lies near the surface, and which for many reasons it may be advantageous to consider. At first thought it may seem superficial and captious; but we do not think

it will at the second, and still less at the third.

Protestantism, and even Anglo-Protestantism, has not been without its great men. In their first fierce struggle for existence, these creeds gave birth to thousands whose names may command any rank in history. But alone of all forms of religion, past or present, and we will add (as we devoutly hope), to come (for in her present form, at least, the Church of England cannot long remain), Protestantism knows not what to do with her own offspring; she is unable to give them open and honourable recognition. Entangled in speculative theories of human depravity, of the worthlessness of the best which the best men can do, Protestantism is unable to say heartily of any one, 'Here is a good man to be loved and remembered with reverence.' There are no saints in the English Church. The English Church does not pretend to saints. Her children may live purely, holily, and beautifully, but her gratitude for them must be silent; she may not thank God for them—she may not hold them up before her congregation. They may or they may not have been really good, but she may not commit herself to attributing a substantial value to the actions of a nature so corrupt as that of man. Among Protestants, the Church of England is the worst, for she is not wholly Protestant. In the utterness of the self-abnegation of the genuine Protestant there is something approaching the heroic. But she, ambitious of being Catholic as well as Protestant, like that old Church of evil memory which would be neither hot nor cold, will

neither wholly abandon merit, nor wholly claim it; but halts on between two opinions, claiming and disclaiming, saying and in the next breath again unsaying. The Oxford student being asked for the doctrine of the Anglican Church on good works, knew the rocks and whirlpools among which an unwary answer might involve him, and steering midway between Scylla and Charybdis, replied, with laudable caution, 'a few of them would not do a man any harm.' It is scarcely a caricature of the prudence of the Articles. And so at last it has come to this with us. The soldier can raise a column to his successful general; the halls of the law courts are hung round with portraits of the ermined sages; Newton has his statue, and Harvey and Watt, in the academies of the sciences; and each young aspirant after fame, entering for the first time upon the calling which he has chosen, sees high excellence highly honoured; sees the high career, and sees its noble ending, marked out each step of it in golden letters. But the Church's aisles are desolate, and desolate they must remain. There is no statue for the Christian. The empty niches stare out like hollow eye-sockets from the walls. Good men live in the Church and die in her, whose story written out or told would be of inestimable benefit, but she may not write it. She may speak of goodness, but not of the good man; as she may speak of sin, but may not censure the sinner. Her position is critical; the Dissenters would lay hold of it. She may not do it, but she will do what she can. She cannot tolerate an image indeed, or a

picture of her own raising; she has no praise to utter at her children's graves, when their lives have witnessed to her teaching. But if others will bear the expense and will risk the sin, she will offer no objection. Her walls are naked. The wealthy ones among her congregation may adorn them as they please; the splendour of a dead man's memorial shall be, not as his virtues were, but as his purse; and his epitaph may be brilliant according as there are means to pay for it. They manage things better at the museums and the institutes.

Let this pass, however, as the worst case. There are other causes at work besides the neglect of Churches; the neglect itself being as much a result as a cause. There is a common dead level over the world, to which Churches and teachers, however seemingly opposite, are alike condemned. As it is here in England, so it is with the American Emerson. The fault is not in them, but in the age of which they are no more than the indicators. We are passing out of old forms of activity into others new and on their present scale untried; and how to work nobly in them is the one problem for us all. Surius will not profit us, nor the 'Mort d'Arthur.' Our calling is neither to the hermitage nor to the round table. Our work lies now in those peaceful occupations which, in ages called heroic, were thought unworthy of noble souls. In those it was the slave who tilled the ground, and wove the garments. It was the ignoble burgher who covered the sea with his ships, and raised up factories and workshops; and how far such occupa-

tions influenced the character, how they could be made to minister to loftiness of heart, and high and beautiful life, was a question which could not occur while the atmosphere of the heroic was on all sides believed so alien to them. Times have changed. The old hero-worship has vanished with the need of it; but no other has risen in its stead, and without it we wander in the dark. The commonplaces of morality, the negative commandments, general exhortations to goodness, while neither speaker nor hearer can tell what they mean by goodness—these are all which now remain to us; and thrown into a life more complicated than any which the earth has yet experienced, we are left to wind our way through the labyrinth of its details without any clue except our own instincts, our own knowledge, our own hopes and desires.

We complain of generalities; we will not leave ourselves exposed to the same charge. We will mention a few of the thousand instances in which we cry for guidance and find none; instances on which those who undertake to teach us ought to have made up their minds.

On the surface at least of the Prayer-book, there seems to be something left remaining of the Catholic penitential system. Fasting is spoken of, and abstinence, and some form or other of self-inflicted self-denial is necessarily meant. This thing can by no possibility be unimportant, and we may well smile at the exclusive claims of a Church to the cure of our souls, who is unable to say what she thinks about it. Let us ask her

living interpreters then, and what shall we get for an answer? either no answer at all, or contradictory answers; angrily, violently, passionately contradictory. Among the many voices, what is a young man to conclude? He will conclude naturally according to his inclination; and if he chooses right, it will most likely be on a wrong motive.

Again, *courage* is, on all hands, considered as an essential of high character. Among all fine people, old and modern, wherever we are able to get an insight into their training system, we find it a thing particularly attended to. The Greeks, the Romans, the old Persians, our own nation till the last two hundred years, whoever of mankind have turned out good for anything anywhere, knew very well, that to exhort a boy to be brave without training him in it, would be like exhorting a young colt to submit to the bridle without breaking him in. Step by step, as he could bear it, the boy was introduced to danger, till his pulse ceased to be agitated, and he became familiarized with peril as his natural element. It was a matter of carefully considered, thoroughly recognized, and organized education. But courage now-a-days is not a paying virtue. Courage does not help to make money, and so we have ceased to care about it; and boys are left to educate one another by their own semi-brutal instincts, in this, which is perhaps the most important of all features in the human character. Schools, as far as the masters are concerned with them, are places for teaching Greek and Latin—that, and nothing more. At the universities, fox-hunting

is, perhaps, the only discipline of the kind now to be found, and fox-hunting, by forbidding it and winking at it, the authorities have contrived to place on as demoralizing a footing as ingenuity could devise.[1]

To pass from training to life. A boy has done with school and college; he has become a man, and has to choose his profession. It is the one most serious step which he has yet taken. In most cases, there is no recalling it. He believes that he is passing through life to eternity; that his chance of getting to heaven depends on what use he makes of his time; he prays every day that he may be delivered from temptation; it is his business to see that he does not throw himself into it. Now, every one of the many professions has a peculiar character of its own, which, with rare exceptions, it inflicts on those who follow it. There is the shopkeeper type, the manufacturer type, the lawyer type, the medical type, the clerical type, the soldier's, the sailor's. The nature of a man is 'like the dyer's hand, subdued to what it works in;' and we can distinguish with ease, on the slightest intercourse, to what class a grown person belongs. It is to be seen in his look, in his words, in his tone of thought, his voice, gesture, even in his hand-writing; and in everything which he does. Every human employment has its especial moral characteristic, its peculiar temptations, its peculiar influences—of a subtle and not easily analyzed kind, and only to be seen in their effects.

[1] Written 1850.

Here, therefore,—here if anywhere, we want Mr. Emerson with his representatives, or the Church with her advice and warning. But, in fact, what attempt do we see to understand any of this, or even to acknowledge it; to master the moral side of the professions; to teach young men entering them what they are to expect, what to avoid, or what to seek? Where are the highest types—the pattern lawyer, and shopkeeper, and merchant? Are they all equally favourable to excellence of character? Do they offer equal opportunities? Which best suits this disposition, and which suits that? Alas! character is little thought of in the choice. It is rather, which shall I best succeed in? Where shall I make most money? Suppose an anxious boy to go for counsel to his spiritual mother; to go to her, and ask her to guide him. Shall I be a soldier? he says. What will she tell him? This and no more—you may, without sin. Shall I be a lawyer, merchant, manufacturer, tradesman, engineer? Still the same answer. But which is best? he demands. We do not know: we do not know. There is no guilt in either; you may take which you please, provided you go to church regularly, and are honest and good. If he is foolish enough to persist further, and ask, in what goodness and honesty consist in *his especial department* (whichever he selects), he will receive the same answer; in other words, he will be told to give every man his due and be left to find out for himself in what 'his due' consists. It is like an artist telling his pupil to put the lights and shadows in their due places, and leaving it to the

pupil's ingenuity to interpret such instructive directions.

One more instance of an obviously practical kind. Masters, few people will now deny, owe certain duties to their workmen beyond payment at the competition price for their labour, and the workmen owe something to their masters beyond making their own best bargain. Courtesy, on the one side, and respect on the other, are at least due; and wherever human beings are brought in contact, a number of reciprocal obligations at once necessarily arise out of the conditions of their position. It is this question which at the present moment is convulsing an entire branch of English trade. It is this question which has shaken the Continent like an earthquake, and yet it is one which, the more it is thought about, the more clearly seems to refuse to admit of being dealt with by legislation. It is a question for the Gospel and not for the law. The duties are of the kind which it is the business, not of the State, but of the Church, to look to. Why is the Church silent? There are duties; let her examine them, sift them, prove them, and then point them out. Why not—why not? Alas! she cannot, she dare not give offence, and therefore must find none. It is to be feared that we have a rough trial to pass through, before we find our way and understand our obligations. Yet far off we seem to see a time when the lives, the actions of the really great —great good masters, great good landlords, great good working men—will be laid out once more before their several orders, laid out in the name of God, as once the saints' lives were; and the same sounds shall be heard

in factory and in counting-house as once sounded through abbey, chapel, and cathedral aisle—'Look at these men; bless God for them, and follow them.'

And let no one fear that, if such happy time were come, it would result in a tame and weary sameness; that the beautiful variety of individual form would be lost, drilled away in regimental uniformity. Even if it were so, it need not be any the worse for us; we are not told to develope our individualities, we are told to bear fruit. The poor vagabond with all his individualities about him, if by luck he falls into the hands of the recruiting sergeant, finds himself, a year later, with his red coat and his twelve months' training, not a little the better for the loss of them. But such schooling as we have been speaking of will drill out only such individualities as are of the unworthy kind, and will throw the strength of the nature into the development of the healthiest features in it. Far more, as things now are, we see men sinking into sameness—an inorganic, unwholesome sameness, in which the higher nature is subdued, and the *man* is sacrificed to the profession. The circumstances of his life are his world; and he sinks under them, he does not conquer them. If he has to choose between the two, God's uniform is better than the world's. The first gives him freedom; the second takes it from him. Only here, as in everything, we must understand the nature of the element in which we work; understand it; understand the laws of it. Throw off the lower laws; the selfish, debasing influences of the profession; obey the higher; follow love, truthful-

ness, manliness; follow these first, and make the profession serve them; and that is freedom; there is none else possible for man.

Das Gesetz soll nur uns Freiheit geben;

and whatever individuality is lost in the process, we may feel assured that the devil has too much to do with, to make us care to be rid of it.

But how to arrive at this? so easy as it is to suggest on paper, so easy to foretell in words. Raise the level of public opinion, we might say; insist on a higher standard; in the economist's language, increase the demand for goodness, and the supply will follow; or, at any rate, men will do their best. Until we require more of one another, more will not be provided. But this is but to restate the problem in other words. How are we to touch the heart; how to awaken the desire? We believe that the good man, the great man, whatever he be, prince or peasant, is really lovely; that really and truly, if we can only see him, he more than anything will move us; and at least, we have a right to demand that the artificial hindrances which prevent our lifting him above the crowd, shall be swept away. He in his beautiful life is a thousand times more God's witness than any preacher in a pulpit, and his light must not be concealed any more. As we said, what lies in the way of our sacred recognition of great men is more than anything else the Protestant doctrine of good works. We do not forget what it meant when the world first heard of it. It was a cry from the very sanctuary

of the soul, flinging off and execrating the accursed theory of merits, the sickening parade of redundant saintly virtues, which the Roman Church had converted into stock, and dispensed for the benefit of the believers. This is not the place to pour out our nausea on so poor, yet so detestable a farce. But it seems with all human matters that as soon as spiritual truths are petrified into doctrines, it is another name for their death. They die, corrupt, and breed a pestilence. The doctrine of good works was hurled away by an instinct of generous feeling, and this feeling itself has again become dead, and a fresh disease has followed upon it. Nobody (or, at least, nobody good for anything) will lay a claim to merit for this or that good action which he may have done. Exactly in proportion as a man is really good, will be the eagerness with which he will refuse all credit for it; he will cry out, with all his soul, 'Not unto us —not unto us.'

And yet, practically, we all know and feel that between man and man there is an infinite moral difference; one is good, one is bad, another hovers between the two; the whole of our conduct to each other is necessarily governed by a recognition of this fact, just as it is in the analogous question of the will. Ultimately, we are nothing of ourselves; we know that we are but what God has given us grace to be—we did not make ourselves—we do not keep ourselves here—we are but what in the eternal order of Providence we were designed to be—exactly that and nothing else; and yet we treat each other as responsible; we cannot help it.

The most rigid Calvinist cannot eliminate his instincts; his loves and hatreds seem rather to deepen in intensity of colouring as, logically, his creed should lead him to conquer them as foolish. It is useless, it is impossible, to bring down these celestial mysteries upon our earth, to try to see our way by them, or determine our feelings by them; men are good, men are bad, relatively to us and to our understandings if you will, but still really, and so they must be treated.

There is no more mischievous falsehood than to persist in railing at man's nature, as if it were all vile together, as if the best and the worst which comes of it were in God's sight equally without worth. These denunciations tend too fatally to realize themselves. Tell a man that no good which he can do is of any value, and depend upon it he will take you at your word—most especially will the wealthy, comfortable, luxurious man, just the man who has most means to do good, and whom of all things it is most necessary to stimulate to it. Surely we should not be afraid. The instincts which God has placed in our hearts are too mighty for us to be able to extinguish them with doctrinal sophistry. We love the good man, we praise him, we admire him—we cannot help it; and surely it is mere cowardice to shrink from recognizing it openly — thankfully, divinely recognizing it. If true at all, there is no truth in heaven or earth of deeper practical importance to us; and Protestantism must have lapsed from its once generous spirit, if it persists in imposing a dogma of its own upon our hearts, the touch of which is fatal as the

touch of a torpedo to any high or noble endeavours after excellence.

'Drive out nature with a fork, she ever comes running back; and while we leave out of consideration the reality, we are filling the chasm with inventions of our own. The only novels which are popular among us are those which picture the successful battles of modern men and women with modern life, which are imperfect shadows of those real battles which every reader has seen in some form or other, or has longed to see in his own small sphere. It shows where the craving lies if we had but the courage to meet it; why need we fall back on imagination to create what God has created ready for us? In every department of human life, in the more and the less, there is always one man who is the best, and one type of man which is the best, living and working his silent way to heaven in the very middle of us. Let us find this type then—let us see what it is which makes such men the best, and raise up their excellences into an acknowledged and open standard, of which they themselves shall be the living witnesses. Is there a landlord who is spending his money, not on pineries and hothouses, but on schools, and washhouses, and drains; who is less intent on the magnificence of his own grand house, than in providing cottages for his people where decency is possible; then let us not pass him by with a torpid wonder or a vanishing emotion of pleasure—rather let us seize him and raise him up upon a pinnacle, that other landlords may gaze upon him, if, perhaps, their hearts may prick them, and the

world shall learn from what one man has done what they have a right to require that others shall do.

So it might be through the thousand channels of life. It should not be so difficult; the machinery is ready, both to find your men and to use them. In theory, at least, every parish has its pastor, and the state of every soul is or ought to be known. We know not what turn things may take, or what silent changes are rushing on below us. Even while the present organization remains ——but, alas! no—it is no use to urge a Church bound hand and foot in State shackles to stretch its limbs in any wholesome activity. If the teachers of the people really were the wisest and best and noblest men among us, this and a thousand other blessed things would follow from it; till then let us be content to work and pray, and lay our hand to the wheel wherever we can find a spoke to grasp. *Corruptio optimi est pessima;* the national Church as it ought to be is the soul and conscience of the body politic, but a man whose body has the direction of his conscience we do not commonly consider in the most hopeful moral condition.

REYNARD THE FOX.[1]

LORD MACAULAY, in his Essay on Machiavelli, propounds a singular theory. Declining the various solutions which have been offered to explain how a man supposed to be so great could have lent his genius to the doctrine of 'the Prince,' he has advanced a hypothesis of his own, which may or may not be true, as an interpretation of Machiavelli's character, but which, as an exposition of a universal ethical theory, is as questionable as what it is brought forward to explain. We will not show Lord Macaulay the disrespect of supposing that he has attempted an elaborate piece of irony. It is possible that he may have been exercising his genius with a paradox, but the subject is not of the sort in which we can patiently permit such exercises. It is hard work with all of us to keep ourselves straight, even when we see the road with all plainness as it lies out before us; and clever men must

[1] *Fraser's Magazine*, 1852.

be good enough to find something else to amuse themselves with, instead of dusting our eyes with sophistry.

According to this conception of human nature, the basenesses and the excellences of mankind are no more than accidents of circumstance, the results of national feeling and national capabilities; and cunning and treachery, and lying, and such other 'natural defences of the weak against the strong,' are in themselves neither good nor bad, except as thinking makes them so. They are the virtues of a weak people, and they will be as much admired, and are as justly admirable; they are to the full as compatible with the highest graces and most lofty features of the heart and intellect, as any of those opposite so-called heroisms which we are generally so unthinking as to allow to monopolize the name. Cunning is the only resource of the feeble; and why may we not feel for victorious cunning as strong a sympathy as for the bold, downright, open bearing of the strong? That there may be no mistake in the essayist's meaning, that he may drive the nail home into the English understanding, he takes an illustration which shall be familiar to all of us in the characters of Iago and Othello. To our northern thought, the free and noble nature of the Moor is wrecked through a single infirmity, by a fiend in the human form. To one of Machiavelli's Italians, Iago's keen-edged intellect would have appeared as admirable as Othello's daring appears to us, and Othello himself little better than a fool and a savage. It is but a change of scene, of climate, of the animal qualities of

the frame, and evil has become good, and good has become evil. Now, our displeasure with Lord Macaulay is, not that he has advanced a novel and mischievous theory: it was elaborated long ago in the finely-tempered dialectics of the Schools of Rhetoric at Athens; and so long as such a phenomenon as a cultivated rogue remains possible among mankind, it will reappear in all languages and under any number of philosophical disguises Seldom or never, however, has it appeared with so little attempt at disguise. It has been left for questionable poets and novelists to idealize the rascal genus; philosophers have escaped into the ambiguities of general propositions, and we do not remember elsewhere to have met with a serious ethical thinker deliberately laying two whole organic characters, with their vices and virtues in full life and bloom, side by side, asking himself which is best, and answering gravely that it is a matter of taste.

Lord Macaulay has been bolder than his predecessors; he has shrunk from no conclusion, and has looked directly into the very heart of the matter; he has struck, as we believe, the very lowest stone of our ethical convictions, and declared that the foundation quakes under it.

For, ultimately, how do we know that right is right, and wrong is wrong? People in general accept it on authority; but authority itself must repose on some ulterior basis; and what is that? Are we to say that in morals there is a system of primary axioms, out of which we develope our conclusions, and apply them, as

they are needed, to life? It does not appear so. The analogy of morals is rather with art than with geometry. The grace of heaven gives us good men, and gives us beautiful creations; and, we perceiving by the instincts within ourselves that celestial presence in the objects on which we gaze, find out for ourselves the laws which make them what they are, not by comparing them with any antecedent theory, but by careful analysis of our own impressions, by asking ourselves what it is which we admire in them, and by calling that good, and calling that beautiful.

So, then, if admiration be the first fact—if the sense of it be the ultimate ground on which the after temple of morality, as a system, upraises itself—if we can be challenged here on our own ground, and fail to make it good, what we call the life of the soul becomes a dream of a feeble enthusiast, and we moralists a mark for the sceptic's finger to point at with scorn.

Bold and ably-urged arguments against our own convictions, if they do not confuse us, will usually send us back over our ground to re-examine the strength of our positions: and if we are honest with ourselves, we shall very often find points of some uncertainty left unguarded, of which the show of the strength of our enemy will oblige us to see better to the defence. It was not without some shame, and much uneasiness, that, while we were ourselves engaged in this process, full of indignation with Lord Macaulay, we heard a clear voice ringing in our ear, 'Who art thou that judgest another?' and warning us of the presence in

our own heart of a sympathy which we could not 'deny,' with the sadly questionable hero of the German epic, 'Reynard the Fox.' With our vulpine friend; we were on the edge of the very same abyss, if, indeed, we were not rolling in the depth of it. By what sophistry could we justify ourselves, if not by the very same which we had just been so eagerly condemning? And our conscience whispered to us that we had been swift to detect a fault in another, because it was the very fault to which, in our own heart of hearts, we had a latent leaning.

Was it so indeed, then? Was Reineke no better than Iago? Was the sole difference between them, that the *vates sacer* who had sung the exploits of Reineke loved the wicked rascal, and entangled us in loving him? It was a question to be asked. And yet we had faith enough in the straightforwardness of our own sympathies to feel sure that it must admit of some sort of answer. And, indeed, we rapidly found an answer satisfactory enough to give us time to breathe, in remembering that Reineke, with all his roguery, has no malice in him. It is not in his nature to hate; he could not do it if he tried. The characteristic of Iago is that deep motiveless malignity which rejoices in evil as its proper element—which loves evil as good men love virtue. In calculations on the character of the Moor, Iago despises Othello's unsuspicious trustingness as imbecility, while he hates him as a man because his nature is the perpetual opposite and perpetual reproach of his own. Now, Reineke would not

have hurt a creature, not even Scharfenebbe, the crow's wife, when she came to peck his eyes out, if he had not been hungry; and that γαστρὸς ἀνάγκη, that craving of the stomach, makes a difference quite infinite. It is true that, like Iago, Reineke rejoices in the exercise of his intellect: the sense of his power and the scientific employment of his time are a real delight to him; but then, as we said, he does not love evil for its own sake; he is only somewhat indifferent to it. If the other animals venture to take liberties with him, he will repay them in their own coin, and get his quiet laugh at them at the same time; but the object generally for which he lives is the natural one of getting his bread for himself and his family; and, as the great moralist says, 'It is better to be bad for something than for nothing.' Badness generally is undesirable; but badness in its essence, which may be called heroic badness, is gratuitous.

But this first thought served merely to give us a momentary relief from our alarm, and we determined we would sift the matter to the bottom, and no more expose ourselves to be taken at such disadvantage. We went again to the poem, with our eyes open, and our moral sense as keenly awake as a genuine wish to understand our feelings could make it. We determined that we would really know what we did feel and what we did not. We would not be lightly scared away from our friend, but neither would we any more allow our judgment to be talked down by that fluent tongue of his; he should have justice from us, he and

his biographer, as far as it lay with us to discern justice and to render it.

And really on this deliberate perusal it did seem little less than impossible that we could find any conceivable attribute illustrated in Reineke's proceedings which we could dare to enter in our catalogue of virtues, and not blush to read it there. What sin is there in the Decalogue in which he has not steeped himself to the lips? To the lips, shall we say? nay, over head and ears—rolling and rollicking in sin. Murder, and theft, and adultery; sacrilege, perjury, lying—his very life is made of them. On he goes to the end, heaping crime on crime, and lie on lie, and at last when it seems that justice, which has been so long vainly halting after him, has him really in her iron grasp, there is a solemn appeal to heaven, a challenge, a battle ordeal, in which, by means we may not venture even to whisper, the villain prospers, and comes out glorious, victorious, amidst the applause of a gazing world. To crown it all, the poet tells us that under the disguise of the animal name and form the world of man is represented, and the true course of it; and the idea of the book is, that we who read it may learn therein to discern between good and evil, and choose the first and avoid the last. It seemed beyond the power of sophistry to whitewash Reineke, and the interest which still continued to cling to him seemed too nearly to resemble the unwisdom of the multitude, with whom success is the one virtue, and failure the only crime.

It appeared, too, that although the animal disguises were too transparent to endure a moment's reflection, yet that they were so gracefully worn that such moment's reflection was not to be come at without an effort. Our imagination following the costume, did imperceptibly betray our judgment; we admired the human intellect, the ever ready prompt sagacity and presence of mind. We delighted in the satire on the foolishnesses and greedinesses of our own fellow-creatures; but in our regard for the hero we forgot his humanity wherever it was his interest that we should forget it, and while we admired him as a man we judged him only as a fox. We doubt whether it would have been possible, if he had been described as an open acknowledged biped in coat and trousers, to have retained our regard for him. Something or other in us, either real rightmindedness, or humbug, or hypocrisy, would have obliged us to mix more censure with our liking than most of us do in the case as it stands. It may be that the dress of the fox throws us off our guard, and lets out a secret or two which we commonly conceal even from ourselves. When we have to pass an opinion upon bad people, who at the same time are clever and attractive, we say rather what we think that we ought to feel than what we feel in reality; while with Reineke, being but an animal, we forget to make ourselves up, and for once our genuine tastes show themselves freely. Some degree of truth there undoubtedly is in this. But making all allowance for it —making all and over allowance for the trick which is

passed upon our senses, there still remained a feeling unresolved. The poem was not solely the apotheôsis of a rascal in whom we were betrayed into taking an interest; and it was not a satire merely on the world, and on the men whom the world delight to honour. There was still something which really deserved to be liked in Reineke, and what it was we had as yet failed to discover.

'Two are better than one,' and we resolved in our difficulty to try what our friends might have to say about it. The appearance of the Würtemberg animals at the Exhibition came fortunately *apropos* to our assistance: a few years ago it was rare to find a person who had read the Fox Epic; and still more, of course, to find one whose judgment would be worth taking about it. But now the charming figures of Reineke himself, and the Lion King, and Isegrim, and Bruin, and Bellyn, and Hintze, and Grimbart, had set all the world asking who and what they were, and the story began to get itself known. The old editions, which had long slept unbound in reams upon the shelves, began to descend and clothe themselves in green and crimson. Mr Dickens sent a summary of it round the households of England. Everybody began to talk of Reineke; and now, at any rate, we said to ourselves, we shall see whether we are alone in our liking—whether others share in this strange sympathy, or whether it be some unique and monstrous moral obliquity in ourselves.

We set to work, therefore, with all earnestness, feeling our way first with fear and delicacy, as conscious

of our own delinquency, to gather judgments which should be wiser than our own, and correct ourselves, if it proved that we required correction, with whatever severity might be necessary. The result of this labour of ours was not a little surprising. We found that women invariably, with that clear moral instinct of theirs, at once utterly reprobated and detested our poor Reynard; detested the hero and detested the bard who sang of him with so much sympathy; while men we found almost invariably feeling just as we felt ourselves, only with this difference, that we saw no trace of uneasiness in them about the matter. It was no little comfort to us, moreover, to find that the exceptions were rather among the half-men, the would-be extremely good, but whose goodness was of that dead and passive kind which spoke to but a small elevation of thought or activity; while just in proportion as a man was strong, and real, and energetic, was his ability to see good in Reineke. It was really most strange: one near friend of ours—a man who, as far as we knew (and we knew him well), had never done a wrong thing—when we ventured to hint something about roguery, replied, 'You see, he was such a clever rogue, that he had a right.' Another, whom we pressed more closely with that treacherous cannibal feast at Malepartus, on the body of poor Lampe, said off-hand and with much impatience of such questioning, 'Such fellows were made to be eaten.' What could we do? It had come to this;—as in the exuberance of our pleasure with some dear child, no ordinary epithet will sometimes reach to express the vehemence of our

affection, and borrowing language out of the opposites, we call him little rogue or little villain, so here, reversing the terms of the analogy, we bestow the fulness of our regard on Reineke because of that transcendently successful roguery

When we asked our friends how they came to feel as they did, they had little to say. They were not persons who could be suspected of any latent disposition towards evil doing; and yet though it appeared as if they were falling under the description of those unhappy ones who, if they did not such things themselves, yet 'had pleasure in those who did them,' they did not care to justify themselves. The fact was so: ἀρχὴ τὸ ὅτι: it was a fact—what could we want more? Some few attempted feebly to maintain that the book was a satire. But this only moved the difficulty a single step; for the fact of the sympathy remained unimpaired, and if it was a satire we were ourselves the objects of it. Others urged what we said above, that the story was only of poor animals that, according to Descartes, not only had no souls, but scarcely had even life in any original and sufficient sense, and therefore we need not trouble ourselves. But one of two alternatives it seemed we were bound to choose, either of which was fatal to the proposed escape. Either there was a man hiding under the fox's skin; or else, if real foxes have such brains as Reineke was furnished withal, no honest doubt could be entertained that some sort of conscience was not forgotten in the compounding of him, and he must be held answerable according to his knowledge.

What would Mr Carlyle say of it, we thought, with his might and right? 'The just thing in the long run is the strong thing.' But Reineke had a long run out and came in winner. Does he only 'seem to succeed?' Who does succeed, then, if he no more than seems? The vulpine intellect knows where the geese live, it is elsewhere said; but among Reineke's victims we do not remember one goose, in the literal sense of goose; and as to geese metaphorical, the whole visible world lies down complacently at his feet. Nor does Mr Carlyle's expressed language on this very poem serve any better to help us—nay, it seems as if he feels uneasy in the neighbourhood of so strong a rascal, so briefly he dismisses him. 'Worldly prudence is the only virtue which is certain of its reward.' Nay, but there is more in it than that: no worldly prudence would command the voices which have been given in to us for Reineke.

Three only possibilities lay now before us: either we should, on searching, find something solid in the Fox's doings to justify success; or else the just thing was not always the strong thing; or it might be, that such very semblance of success was itself the most miserable failure; that the wicked man who was struck down and foiled, and foiled again, till he unlearnt his wickedness, or till he was disabled from any more attempting it, was blessed in his disappointment; that to triumph in wickedness, and to continue in it and to prosper to the end, was the last, worst penalty inflicted by the Divine vengeance. Ἵν' ἀθάνατος ᾖ ἄδικος ὤν—to

go on with injustice through this world and through all eternity, uncleansed by any purgatorial fire, untaught by any untoward consequence to open his eyes, and to see in its true accursed form the miserable demon to which he has sold himself—this, of all catastrophes which could befall an evil man, was the deepest, lowest, and most savouring of hell, which the purest of the Grecian moralists could reason out for himself,—under which third hypothesis many an uneasy misgiving would vanish away, and Mr Carlyle's broad aphorism might be accepted by us with thankfulness.

It appeared, therefore, at any rate, to have to come to this—that if we wanted a solution for our sphinx enigma, no Œdipus was likely to rise and find it for us; and that if we wanted help, we must take it for ourselves. This only we found, that if we sinned in our regard for the unworthy animal, we shared our sin with the largest number of our own sex. Comforted with the sense of good fellowship, we went boldly to work upon our consciousness; and the imperfect analysis which we succeeded in accomplishing, we here lay before you, whoever you may be, who have felt, as we have felt, a regard which was a moral disturbance to you, and which you will be pleased if we enable you to justify—

> Si quid novisti rectius istis,
> Candidus imperti; si non, his utere mecum.

Following the clue which was thrust into our hand by the marked difference of the feelings of men upon the subject from those of women, we were at once satisfied that Reineke's goodness, if he had any, must lay

rather in the active than the passive department of life. The negative obedience to prohibitory precepts, under which women are bound as well as men, as was already too clear, we were obliged to surrender as hopeless But it seemed as if, with respect to men, whose business is to do, and to labour, and to accomplish, this negative test was a seriously imperfect one; and it was quite as possible that a man who unhappily had broken many prohibitions might yet exhibit positive excellences, as that he might walk through life picking his way with the utmost assiduity, risking nothing and doing nothing, not committing a single sin, but keeping his talent carefully wrapt up in a napkin, and get sent, in the end, to outer darkness for his pains, as an unprofitable servant. And this appeared the more important to us, as it was very little dwelt upon by religious or moral teachers: at the end of six thousand years, the popular notion of virtue, as far as it could get itself expressed, had not risen beyond the mere abstinence from certain specific bad actions.

The king of the beasts forgives Reineke on account of the substantial services which at various times he has rendered. His counsel was always the wisest, his hand the promptest in cases of difficulty; and all that dexterity, and politeness, and courtesy, and exquisite culture had not been learnt without an effort, or without conquering many undesirable tendencies in himself. Men are not born with any art in its perfection, and Reineke had made himself valuable by his own sagacity and exertion. Now, on the human stage, a man who

has made himself valuable is certain to be valued. However we may pretend to estimate men according to the wrong things which they have done, or abstained from doing, we in fact follow the example of Nobel, the king of the beasts: we give them their places among us according to the serviceableness and capability which they display. We might mention not a few eminent public servants, whom the world delights to honour—ministers, statesmen, lawyers, men of science, artists, poets, soldiers, who, if they were tried by the negative test, would show but a poor figure; yet their value is too real to be dispensed with; and we tolerate unquestionable wrong to secure the services of eminent ability. The world really does this, and it always has really done it from the beginning of the human history; and it is only indolence or cowardice which has left our ethical teaching halting so far behind the universal and necessary practice. Even questionable prima donnas, in virtue of their sweet voices, have their praises hymned in drawing-room and newspaper, and applause rolls over them, and gold and bouquets shower on them from lips and hands which, except for those said voices, would treat them to a ruder reward. In real fact, we take our places in this world, not according to what we are not, but according to what we are. 'His Holiness Pope Clement, when his audience-room rang with furious outcries for justice on Benvenuto Cellini, who, as far as half-a-dozen murders could form a title, was as fair a candidate for the gallows as ever swung from that unlucky wood, replied, 'All this is very well,

gentlemen: these murders are bad things, we know that. But where am I to get another Benvenuto if you hang this one for me?'

Or, to take an acknowledged hero, one of the old Greek sort, the theme of the song of the greatest of human poets, whom it is less easy to refuse to admire than even our friend Reineke. Take Ulysses. It cannot be said that he kept his hands from taking what was not his, or his tongue from speaking what was not true; and if Frau Ermelyn had to complain (as indeed there was too much reason for her complaining) of certain infirmities in her good husband Reineke, Penelope, too, might have urged a thing or two, if she had known as much about the matter as we know, which the modern moralist would find it hard to excuse.

After all is said, the capable man is the man to be admired. The man who tries and fails, what is the use of him? We are in this world to do something—not to fail in doing it. Of your bunglers—helpless, inefficient persons, 'unfit alike for good or ill,' who try one thing, and fail because they are not strong enough, and another, because they have not energy enough, and a third, because they have no talent—inconsistent, unstable, and therefore never to excel, what shall we say of them? what use is there in them? what hope is there of them? what can we wish for them? *τὸ μήποτ' εἶναι πάντ' ἄριστον.* It were better for them they had never been born. To be able to do what a man tries to do, that is the first requisite; and given that, we may hope all things for him. 'Hell is paved with

good intentions,' the proverb says; and the enormous proportion of bad successes in this life lie between the desire and the execution. Give us a man who is able to do what he settles that he desires to do, and we have the one thing indispensable. If he can succeed doing ill, much more he can succeed doing well. Show him better, and, at any rate, there is a chance that he will do better.

We are not concerned here with Benvenuto or with Ulysses further than to show, through the position which we all consent to give them, that there is much unreality in our common moral talk, against which we must be on our guard. And if we fling off an old friend, and take to affecting a hatred of him which we do not feel, we have scarcely gained by the exchange, even though originally our friendship may have been misplaced.

Capability no one will deny to Reineke. That is the very *differentia* of him. An 'animal capable' would be his sufficient definition. Here is another very genuinely valuable feature about him—his wonderful singleness of character. Lying, treacherous, cunning scoundrel as he is, there is a wholesome absence of humbug about him. Cheating all the world, he never cheats himself; and while he is a hypocrite, he is always a conscious hypocrite—a form of character, however paradoxical it may seem, a great deal more accessible to good influences than the other of the unconscious sort. Ask Reineke for the principles of his life, and if it suited his purpose to tell you, he could do so with

the greatest exactness. There would be no discrepancy between the profession and the practice. He is most truly single-minded, and therefore stable in his ways, and therefore, as the world goes, and in the world's sense, successful. Whether really successful is a question we do not care here to enter on; but only to say this—that of all unsuccessful men in every sense, either divine, or human, or devilish, there is none equal to Bunyan's Mr Facing-both-ways—the fellow with one eye on heaven and one on earth—who sincerely preaches one thing, and sincerely does another; and from the intensity of his unreality is unable either to see or feel the contradiction. Serving God with his lips, and with the half of his mind which is not bound up in the world, and serving the devil with his actions, and with the other half, he is substantially trying to cheat both God and the devil, and is, in fact, only cheating himself and his neighbours. This, of all characters upon the earth, appears to us to be the one of whom there is no hope at all—a character becoming, in these days, alarmingly abundant; and the abundance of which makes us find even in a Reineke an inexpressible relief.

But what we most thoroughly value in him is his capacity. He can do what he sets to work to do. That blind instinct with which the world shouts and claps its hand for the successful man, is one of those latent impulses in us which are truer than we know; it *is* the universal confessional to which Nature leads us, and, in her intolerance of disguise and hypocrisy, compels us to be our own accusers. Whoever can succeed in a

given condition of society, can succeed only in virtue of fulfilling the terms which society exacts of him; and if he can fulfil them triumphantly, of course it rewards him and praises him. He is what the rest of the world would be, if their powers were equal to their desires. He has accomplished what they all are vaguely, and with imperfect consistency, struggling to accomplish; and the character of the conqueror—the means and appliances by which he has climbed up that great pinnacle on which he stands victorious, the observed of all observers, is no more than a very exact indicator of the amount of real virtue in the age, out of which he stands prominent.

We are forced to acknowledge that it was not a very virtuous age in which Reineke made himself a great man; but that was the fault of the age as much as the fault of him. His nature is to succeed wherever he is. If the age had required something else of him, then he would have been something else. Whatever it had said to him, 'Do, and I will make you my hero,' that Reineke would have done. No appetite makes a slave of him—no faculty refuses obedience to his will. His entire nature is under perfect organic control to the one supreme authority. And the one object for which he lives, and for which, let his lot have been cast in whatever century it might, he would always have lived, is to rise, to thrive, to prosper, and become great.

The world as he found it said to him—Prey upon us; we are your oyster, let your wit open us. If you will only do it cleverly—if you will take care that we

shall not close upon your fingers in the process, you may devour us at your pleasure, and we shall feel ourselves highly honoured. Can we wonder at a fox of Reineke's abilities taking such a world at its word?

And let it not be supposed that society in this earth of ours is ever so viciously put together, is ever so totally without organic life, that a rogue, unredeemed by any merit, can prosper in it. There is no strength in rottenness; and when it comes to that, society dies and falls in pieces. Success, as it is called, even worldly success, is impossible, without some exercise of what is called moral virtue, without some portion of it, infinitesimally small, perhaps, but still some. Courage, for instance, steady self-confidence, self-trust, self-reliance—that only basis and foundation-stone on which a strong character can rear itself—do we not see this in Reineke? While he lives, he lives for himself; but if he comes to dying, he can die like his betters; and his wit is not of that effervescent sort which will fly away at the sight of death and leave him panic-stricken. It is true there is a meaning to that word courage, which was perhaps not to be found in the dictionary in which Reineke studied. 'I hope I am afraid of nothing, Trim,' said my uncle Toby, 'except doing a wrong thing.' With Reineke there was no 'except.' His digestive powers shrank from no action, good or bad, which would serve his turn. Yet it required no slight measure of courage to treat his fellow-creatures with the steady disrespect with which Reineke treats them. To walk along among them, regardless of any interest but his own;

out of mere wantonness to hook them up like so many cock-chafers, and spin them for his pleasure; not like Domitian, with an imperial army to hold them down during the operation, but with no other assistance but his own little body and large wit; it was something to venture upon. And a world which would submit to be so treated, what could he do but despise?

To the animals utterly below ourselves, external to our own species, we hold ourselves bound by no law. We say to them, *vos non vobis*, without any uneasy misgivings. We rob the bees of their honey, the cattle of their lives, the horse and the ass of their liberty. We kill the wild animals that they may not interfere with our pleasures; and acknowledge ourselves bound to them by no terms except what are dictated by our own convenience. And why should Reineke have acknowledged an obligation any more than we, to creatures so utterly below himself? He was so clever, as our friend said, that he had a right. That he *could* treat them so, Mr Carlyle would say, proves that he had a right.

But it is a mistake to say he is without a conscience. No bold creature is ever totally without one. Even Iago shows some sort of conscience. Respecting nothing else in heaven or earth, he respects and even reverences his own intellect. After one of those sweet interviews with Roderigo, his, what we must call conscience, takes him to account for his company; and he pleads to it in his own justification—

> For I mine own gained knowledge should *profane*
> Were I to waste myself with such a snipe
> But for my sport and profit.

Reineke, if we take the mass of his misdeeds, preyed chiefly, like our own Robin Hood, on rogues who were greater rogues than himself. If Bruin chose to steal Rusteviel's honey, if Hintze trespassed in the priest's granary, they were but taken in their own evil-doings. And what is Isegrim, the worst of Reineke's victims, but a great heavy, stupid, lawless brute?—fair type, we will suppose, of not a few Front-de-Bœufs and other so-called nobles of the poet's era, whose will to do mischief was happily limited by their obtuseness. We remember that French baron—Gilbert de Retz, we believe, was his name—who, like Isegrim, had studied at the universities, and passed for learned, whose after-dinner pastime for many years, as it proved at last, was to cut children's throats for the pleasure of watching them die. We may well feel gratitude that a Reineke was provided to be the scourge of such monsters as these; and we have a thorough pure, exuberant satisfaction in seeing the intellect in that little weak body triumph over them and trample them down. This, indeed, this victory of intellect over brute force, is one great secret of our pleasure in the poem, and goes far, in the Carlyle direction, to satisfy us that, at any rate, it is not given to mere base physical strength to win in the battle of life, even in times when physical strength is apparently the only recognized power.

We are insensibly falling from our self-assumed judicial office into that of advocacy; and sliding into what may be plausibly urged, rather than standing fast on what we can surely affirm. Yet there are cases

when it is fitting for the judge to become the advocate of an undefended prisoner; and advocacy is only plausible when a few words of truth are mixed with what we say, like the few drops of wine which colour and faintly flavour the large draught of water. Such few grains or drops, whatever they may be, we must leave to the kindness of Reynard's friends to distil for him, while we continue a little longer in the same strain.

After all, it may be said, what is it in man's nature which is really admirable? It is idle for us to waste our labour in passing Reineke through the moral crucible unless we shall recognize the results when we obtain them; and in these moral sciences our analytical tests can only be obtained by a study of our own internal experience. If we desire to know what we admire in Reineke, we must look for what we admire in ourselves. And what is that? Is it what on Sundays, and on set occasions, and when we are mounted on our moral stilts, we are pleased to call goodness, probity, obedience, humility? Is it? Is it really? Is it not rather the face and form which nature made—the strength which is ours, we know not how—our talents, our rank, our possessions? It appears to us that we most value in ourselves and most admire in our neighbour, not acquisitions, but *gifts*. A man does not praise himself for being good. If he praise himself he is not good. The first condition of goodness is forgetfulness of self; and where self has entered, under however plausible a form, the health is but skin-deep, and underneath there

is corruption. And so through everything; we value, we are vain of, proud of, or whatever you please to call it, not what we have done for ourselves, but what has been done for us—what has been given to us by the upper powers. We look up to high-born men, to wealthy men, to fortunate men, to clever men. Is it not so? Whom do we choose for the county member, the magistrate, the officer, the minister? The good man we leave to the humble enjoyment of his goodness, and we look out for the able, or the wealthy. And again of the wealthy, as if on every side to witness to the same universal law, the man who with no labour of his own has inherited a fortune, ranks higher in the world's esteem than his father who made it. We take rank by descent. Such of us as have the longest pedigree, and are therefore the farthest removed from the first who made the fortune and founded the family, we are the noblest. The nearer to the fountain the fouler the stream; and that first ancestor, who has soiled his fingers by labour, is no better than a parvenu.

And as it is with what we value, so it is with what we blame. It is an old story, that there is no one who would not in his heart prefer being a knave to being a fool; and when we fail in a piece of attempted roguery, as Coleridge has wisely observed, though reasoning unwisely from it, we lay the blame, not on our own moral nature, for which we are responsible, but on our intellectual, for which we are not responsible. We do not say what knaves, we say what fools, we have been; perplexing Coleridge, who regards it as a phenomenon

of some deep moral disorder; whereas it is but one more evidence of the universal fact that *gifts* are the true and proper object of appreciation; and as we admire men for possessing gifts, so we blame them for their absence. The noble man is the gifted man; the ignoble is the ungifted; and therefore we have only to state a simple law in simple language to have a full solution of the enigma of Reineke. He has gifts enough; of that, at least, there can be no doubt; and if he lacks the gift to use them in the way which we call good, at least he uses them successfully. His victims are less gifted than he, and therefore less noble; and therefore he has a right to use them as he pleases.

And, after all, what are these victims? Among the heaviest charges which were urged against him was the killing and eating of that wretched Scharfenebbe—Sharpbeak—the crow's wife. It is well that there are two sides to every story. A poor weary fox, it seemed, was not to be allowed to enjoy a quiet sleep in the sunshine but what an unclean carrion bird must come down and take a peck at him. We can feel no sympathy with the outcries of the crow husband over the fate of the unfortunate Sharpbeak. Wofully, he says, he flew over the place where, a few moments before, in the glory of glossy plumage, a loving wife sat croaking out her passion for him, and found nothing—nothing but a little blood and a few torn feathers—all else clean gone and utterly abolished. Well, and if it was so, it was a blank prospect for him, but the earth was well

rid of her; and for herself, it was a higher fate to be assimilated into the body of Reineke than to remain in a miserable individuality to be a layer of carrion crow's eggs.

And then for Bellyn, and for Bruin, and for Hintze, and the rest, who would needs be meddling with what was no concern of theirs—what is there in them to challenge either regret or pity? They made love to their occupation.

> 'Tis dangerous when the baser nature falls
> Between the pass and fell incensed points
> Of mighty opposites:
> They lie not near our conscience.

Ah! if they were all. But there is one misdeed, one which outweighs all others whatsoever—a crime which it is useless to palliate, let our other friend say what he pleased; and Reineke himself felt it so. It sat heavy, *for him*, on his soul, and alone of all the actions of his life we are certain that he wished it undone—the death and eating of that poor foolish Lampe, the hare. It was a paltry revenge in Reineke. Lampe had told tales of him; he had complained that Reineke, under pretence of teaching him his Catechism, had seized him and tried to murder him; and though he provoked his fate by thrusting himself, after such a warning, into the jaws of Malepartus, Reineke betrays an uneasiness about it in confession; and, unlike himself, feels it necessary to make some sort of an excuse.

Grimbart, the badger, Reineke's father confessor,

had been obliged to speak severely of the seriousness of the offence. 'You see,' Reineke answers:—

To help oneself out through the world is a queer sort of business: one can not
Keep, you know, quite altogether as pure as one can in the cloister.
When we are handling honey we now and then lick at our fingers.
Lampe sorely provoked me; he frisked about this way and that way,
Up and down, under my eyes, and he looked so fat and so jolly,
Really I could not resist it. I entirely forgot how I loved him.
And then he was so stupid.

But even this acknowledgment does not satisfy Reineke. His mind is evidently softened, and it was on that occasion that he poured out his pathetic lamentation over the sad condition of the world—so fluent, so musical, so touching, that Grimbart listened with wide eyes, unable, till it had run to the length of a sermon, to collect himself. It is true that at last his office as ghostly father obliged him to put in a slight demurrer:—

Uncle, the badger replied, why, these are the sins of your neighbours;
Yours, I should think, were sufficient, and rather more now to the purpose

But he sighs to think what a bishop Reineke would have made.

And now, for the present, farewell to Reineke Fuchs, and to the song in which his glory is enshrined, the Welt-Bibel—Bible of this world—as Goethe called it, the most exquisite moral satire, as we will call it, which has ever been composed. It is not addressed to a passing mode of folly or of profligacy, but it touches the perennial nature of mankind, laying bare our own sympathies, and tastes, and weaknesses, with as keen

and true an edge as when the living world of the old Swabian poet winced under its earliest utterance.

Humorous in the high pure sense, every laugh which it gives may have its echo in a sigh, or may glide into it as excitement subsides into thought; and yet, for those who do not care to find matter there either for thought or sadness, may remain innocently as a laugh.

Too strong for railing, too kindly and loving for the bitterness of irony, the poem is, as the world itself, a book where each man will find what his nature enables him to see, which gives us back each our own image, and teaches us each the lesson which each of us desires to learn.

JACKSON
MEMORIAL
COLLECTION

THE CAT'S PILGRIMAGE.

1850.

PART I.

'IT is all very fine,' said the Cat, yawning, and stretching herself against the fender, 'but it is rather a bore; I don't see the use of it.' She raised herself, and arranging her tail into a ring, and seating herself in the middle of it, with her fore paws in a straight line from her shoulders, at right angles to the hearth-rug, she looked pensively at the fire. 'It is very odd,' she went on, 'there is my poor Tom; he is gone. I saw him stretched out in the yard. I spoke to him, and he took no notice of me. He won't, I suppose, ever any more, for they put him under the earth. Nice fellow he was. It is wonderful how little one cares about it. So many jolly evenings we spent together; and now I seem to get on quite as well without him. I wonder what has become of him; and my last children, too, what has become of them? What

are we here for? I would ask the men, only they are so conceited and stupid they can't understand what we say. I hear them droning away, teaching their little ones every day; telling them to be good, and to do what they are bid, and all that. Nobody ever tells me to do anything; if they do I don't do it, and I am very good. I wonder whether I should be any better if I minded more. I'll ask the Dog.'

'Dog,' said she, to a little fat spaniel coiled up on a mat, like a lady's muff with a head and tail stuck on to it, 'Dog, what do you make of it all?'

The Dog faintly opened his languid eyes, looked sleepily at the Cat for a moment, and dropped them again.

'Dog,' she said, 'I want to talk to you; don't go to sleep. Can't you answer a civil question?'

'Don't bother me,' said the Dog, 'I am tired. I stood on my hind legs ten minutes this morning before I could get my breakfast, and it hasn't agreed with me.'

'Who told you to do it?' said the Cat.

'Why, the lady I have to take care of me,' replied the Dog.

'Do you feel any better for it, Dog, after you have been standing on your legs?' asked she.

'Hav'n't I told you, you stupid Cat, that it hasn't agreed with me? let me go to sleep and don't plague me.'

'But I mean,' persisted the Cat, 'do you feel improved, as the men call it? They tell their children that if they do what they are told they will improve,

and grow good and great. Do you feel good and great?'

'What do I know?' said the Dog. 'I eat my breakfast and am happy. Let me alone.'

'Do you never think, O Dog without a soul! Do you never wonder what dogs are, and what this world is?'

The Dog stretched himself, and rolled his eyes lazily round the room. 'I conceive,' he said, 'that the world is for dogs, and men and women are put into it to take care of dogs; women to take care of little dogs like me, and men for the big dogs like those in the yard—and cats,' he continued, 'are to know their place, and not to be troublesome.'

'They beat you sometimes,' said the Cat. 'Why do they do that? They never beat me.'

'If they forget their places, and beat me,' snarled the Dog, 'I bite them, and they don't do it again. I should like to bite you, too, you nasty Cat; you have woke me up.'

'There may be truth in what you say,' said the Cat, calmly; 'but I think your view is limited. If you listened like me you would hear the men say it was all made for them, and you and I were made to amuse them.'

'They don't dare to say so?' said the Dog.

'They do, indeed,' said the Cat. 'I hear many things which you lose by sleeping so much. They think I am asleep, and so they are not afraid to talk before me; but my ears are open when my eyes are shut.'

'You surprise me,' said the Dog. 'I never listen

to them, except when I take notice of them, and then they never talk of anything except of me.

'I could tell you a thing or two about yourself which you don't know,' said the Cat. 'You have never heard, I dare say, that once upon a time your fathers lived in a temple, and that people prayed to them?'

'Prayed! what is that?'

'Why, they went on their knees to you to ask you to give them good things, just as you stand on your toes to them now to ask for your breakfast. You don't know either that you have got one of those bright things we see up in the air at night called after you?'

'Well, it is just what I said,' answered the Dog. 'I told you it was all made for us. They never did anything of that sort for you.'

'Didn't they? Why, there was a whole city where the people did nothing else, and as soon as we got stiff and couldn't move about any more, instead of being put under the ground like poor Tom, we used to be stuffed full of all sorts of nice things, and kept better than we were when we were alive.'

'You are a very wise Cat,' answered her companion, 'but what good is it knowing all this?'

'Why, don't you see,' said she, 'they don't do it any more. We are going down in the world, we are, and that is why living on in this way is such an unsatisfactory sort of thing. I don't mean to complain for myself, and you needn't, Dog; we have a quiet life of it; but a quiet life is not the thing, and if there is nothing to be done except sleep and eat, and eat and

sleep, why, as I said before, I don't see the use of it. There is something more in it than that; there was once, and there will be again, and I sha'n't be happy till I find it out. It is a shame, Dog, I say. The men have been here only a few thousand years, and we—why, we have been here hundreds of thousands: if we are older, we ought to be wiser. I'll go and ask the creatures in the wood.'

'You'll learn more from the men,' said the Dog.

'They are stupid, and they don't know what I say to them; besides, they are so conceited they care for nothing except themselves. No, I shall try what I can do in the woods. I'd as soon go after poor Tom as stay living any longer like this.'

'And where is poor Tom?' yawned the Dog.

'That is just one of the things I want to know,' answered she. 'Poor Tom is lying under the yard, or the skin of him, but whether that is the whole I don't feel so sure. They didn't think so in the city I told you about. It is a beautiful day, Dog; you won't take a trot out with me?' she added wistfully.

'Who? I?' said the Dog. 'Not quite.'

'You may get so wise,' said she.

'Wisdom is good,' said the Dog; 'but so is the hearth-rug, thank you!'

'But you may be free,' said she.

'I shall have to hunt for my own dinner,' said he.

'But, Dog, they may pray to you again,' said she.

'But I sha'n't have a softer mat to sleep upon, Cat, and as I am rather delicate, that is a consideration.'

PART II.

So the Dog wouldn't go, and the Cat set off by herself to learn how to be happy, and to be all that a Cat could be. It was a fine sunny morning. She determined to try the meadow first, and, after an hour or two, if she had not succeeded, then to go off to the wood. A blackbird was piping away on a thornbush as if his heart was running over with happiness. The Cat had breakfasted, and so was able to listen without any mixture of feeling. She didn't sneak. She walked boldly up under the bush, and the bird, seeing she had no bad purpose, sat still and sung on.

'Good morning, Blackbird; you seem to be enjoying yourself this fine day.'

'Good morning, Cat.'

'Blackbird, it is an odd question, perhaps. What ought one to do to be as happy as you?'

'Do your duty, Cat.'

'But what is my duty, Blackbird?'

'Take care of your little ones, Cat.'

'I hav'n't any,' said she.

'Then sing to your mate,' said the bird.

'Tom is dead,' said she.

'Poor Cat!' said the bird. 'Then sing over his grave. If your song is sad, you will find your heart grow lighter for it.'

'Mercy!' thought the Cat. 'I could do a little singing with a living lover, but I never heard of singing for a dead one. But you see, bird, it isn't cats' nature. When I am cross, I mew. When I am pleased, I purr; but I must be pleased first. I can't purr myself into happiness.'

'I am afraid there is something the matter with your heart, my Cat. It wants warming; good-bye.'

The Blackbird flew away. The Cat looked sadly after him. 'He thinks I am like him; and he doesn't know that a cat is a cat,' said she. 'As it happens, now, I feel a great deal for a cat. If I hadn't got a heart I shouldn't be unhappy. I won't be angry. I'll try that great fat fellow.'

The Ox lay placidly chewing, with content beaming out of his eyes and playing on his mouth.

'Ox,' she said, 'what is the way to be happy?'

'Do your duty,' said the Ox.

'Bother,' said the Cat, 'duty again! What is it, Ox?'

'Get your dinner,' said the Ox.

'But it is got for me, Ox; and I have nothing to do but to eat it.'

'Well, eat it, then, like me.'

'So I do; but I am not happy for all that.'

'Then you are a very wicked, ungrateful Cat.'

The Ox munched away. A Bee buzzed into a buttercup under the Cat's nose.

'I beg your pardon,' said the Cat, 'it isn't curiosity —what are you doing?'

'Doing my duty; don't stop me, Cat.

'But, Bee, what is your duty?'

'Making honey,' said the Bee.

'I wish I could make honey,' sighed the Cat.

'Do you mean to say you can't?' said the Bee. 'How stupid you must be. What do you do, then?'

'I do nothing, Bee. I can't get anything to do.'

'You won't get anything to do, you mean, you lazy Cat! You are a good-for-nothing drone. Do you know what we do to our drones? We kill them; and that is all they are fit for. Good morning to you.'

'Well, I am sure,' said the Cat, 'they are treating me civilly! I had better have stopped at home at this rate. Stroke my whiskers! heartless! wicked! good-for-nothing! stupid! and only fit to be killed! This is a pleasant beginning, anyhow. I must look for some wiser creatures than these are. What shall I do? I know. I know where I will go.'

It was in the middle of the wood. The bush was very dark, but she found him by his wonderful eye. Presently, as she got used to the light, she distinguished a sloping roll of feathers, a rounded breast, surmounted by a round head, set close to the body, without an inch of a neck intervening. 'How wise he looks!' she said; 'what a brain; what a forehead! His head is not long, but what an expanse! and what a depth of earnestness!' The Owl sloped his head a little on one side; the Cat slanted hers upon the other. The Owl set it straight again, the Cat did the same. They stood looking in this way for some minutes; at last, in a whisper-

ing voice, the Owl said, 'What are you, who presume to look into my repose? Pass on upon your way, and carry elsewhere those prying eyes.'

'O wonderful Owl,' said the Cat, 'you are wise, and I want to be wise; and I am come to you to teach me.'

A film floated backwards and forwards over the Owl's eyes; it was his way of showing that he was pleased.

'I have heard in our schoolroom,' went on the Cat, 'that you sat on the shoulder of Pallas, and she told you all about it.'

'And what would you know, O my daughter?' said the Owl.

'Everything,' said the Cat, 'everything. First of all, how to be happy.'

'Mice content you not, my child, even as they content not me,' said the Owl. 'It is good.'

'Mice indeed!' said the Cat; 'no, Parlour Cats don't eat mice. I have better than mice, and no trouble to get it; but I want something more.'

'The body's meat is provided. You would now fill your soul?'

'I want to improve,' said the Cat. 'I want something to do. I want to find out what the creatures call my duty.'

'You would learn how to employ those happy hours of your leisure?—rather, how to make them happy by a worthy use? Meditate, O Cat! meditate! meditate!'

'That is the very thing,' said she. 'Meditate!

that is what I like above all things. Only I want to know how: I want something to meditate about. Tell me, Owl, and I will bless you every hour of the day as I sit by the parlour fire.'

'I will tell you,' answered the Owl, 'what I have been thinking of ever since the moon changed. You shall take it home with you and think about it too; and the next full moon you shall come again to me: we will compare our conclusions.'

'Delightful! delightful!' said the Cat. 'What is it? I will try this minute.'

'From the beginning,' replied the Owl, 'our race have been considering which first existed, the Owl or the egg. The Owl comes from the egg, but likewise the egg from the Owl.'

'Mercy!' said the Cat.

'From sunrise to sunset I ponder on it, O Cat! When I reflect on the beauty of the complete Owl I think that must have been first as the cause is greater than the effect. When I remember my own childhood I incline the other way.'

'Well, but how are we to find out?' said the Cat.

'Find out!' said the Owl. 'We can never find out. The beauty of the question is, that its solution is impossible. What would become of all our delightful reasonings, O unwise Cat, if we were so unhappy as to know?'

'But what in the world is the good of thinking about it, if you can't, O Owl?'

'My child, that is a foolish question. It is good,

in order that the thoughts on these things may stimulate wonder. It is in wonder that the Owl is great."

'Then you don't know anything at all,' said the Cat. 'What did you sit on Pallas's shoulder for? You must have gone to sleep.'

'Your tone is over-flippant, Cat, for philosophy. The highest of all knowledge is to know that we know nothing.'

The Cat made two great arches with her back and her tail.

'Bless the mother that laid you," said she. 'You were dropped by mistake in a goose-nest. You won't do. I don't know much, but I am not such a creature as you, anyhow. A great white thing!'

She straightened her body, stuck her tail up on end, and marched off with much dignity. But, though she respected herself rather more than before, she was not on the way to the end of her difficulties. She tried all the creatures she met without advancing a step. They had all the old story, 'Do your duty.' But each had its own, and no one could tell her what hers was. Only one point they all agreed upon—the duty of getting their dinner when they were hungry. The day wore on, and she began to think she would like hers. Her meals came so regularly at home that she scarcely knew what hunger was; but now the sensation came over her very palpably, and she experienced quite new emotions as the hares and rabbits skipped about her, or as she spied a bird upon a tree. For a moment she thought she would go back and eat the Owl—he was

the most useless creature she had seen; but on second thoughts she didn't fancy he would be nice: besides that, his claws were sharp and his beak too. Presently, however, as she sauntered down the path, she came on a little open patch of green, in the middle of which a fine fat Rabbit was sitting. There was no escape. The path ended there, and the bushes were so thick on each side that he couldn't get away except through her paws.

'Really,' said the Cat, 'I don't wish to be troublesome; I wouldn't do it if I could help it; but I am very hungry; I am afraid I must eat you. It is very unpleasant, I assure you, to me as well as to you.'

The poor Rabbit begged for mercy.

'Well,' said she, 'I think it is hard; I do really—and, if the law could be altered, I should be the first to welcome it. But what can a cat do? You eat the grass; I eat you. But, Rabbit, I wish you would do me a favour.'

'Anything to save my life,' said the Rabbit.

'It is not exactly that,' said the Cat; 'but I haven't been used to killing my own food, and it is disagreeable. Couldn't you die? I shall hurt you dreadfully if I kill you.'

'Oh!' said the Rabbit, 'you are a kind Cat; I see it in your eyes, and your whiskers don't curl like those of the cats in the woods. I am sure you will spare me.'

'But, Rabbit, it is a question of principle. I have to do my duty; and the only duty I have, as far as I can make out, is to get my dinner.'

'If you kill me, Cat, to do your duty, I sha'n't be able to do mine.'

It was a doubtful point, and the Cat was new to casuistry. 'What is your duty?' said she.

'I have seven little ones at home—seven little ones, and they will all die without me. Pray let me go.'

'What! do you take care of your children?' said the Cat. 'How interesting! I should like to see that; take me.'

'Oh! you would eat them, you would,' said the Rabbit. 'No! better eat me than them. No, no.'

'Well, well,' said the Cat, 'I don't know; I suppose I couldn't answer for myself. I don't think I am right, for duty is pleasant, and it is very unpleasant to be so hungry; but I suppose you must go. You seem a good Rabbit. Are you happy, Rabbit?'

'Happy! oh, dear beautiful Cat! if you spare me to my poor babies!'

'Pooh, pooh!' said the Cat, peevishly; 'I don't want fine speeches; I meant whether you thought it worth while to be alive? Of course you do! It don't matter. Go, and keep out of my way; for, if I don't find something to eat, you may not get off another time. Get along, Rabbit.'

PART III.

It was a great day in the Fox's cave. The eldest cub had the night before brought home his first goose, and they were just sitting down to it as the Cat came by.

'Ah, my young lady! what, you in the woods? Bad feeding at home, eh? Come out to hunt for yourself?'

The goose smelt excellent; the Cat couldn't help a wistful look. She was only come, she said, to pay her respects to her wild friends.

'Just in time,' said the Fox. 'Sit down and take a bit of meat; I see you want it. Make room, you cubs; place a seat for the lady.'

'Why, thank you,' said the Cat, 'yes; I acknowledge it is not unwelcome. Pray, don't disturb yourselves, young Foxes. I am hungry. I met a rabbit on my way here. I was going to eat him, but he talked so prettily I let him go.'

The cubs looked up from their plates, and burst out laughing.

'For shame, young rascals,' said their father. 'Where are your manners? Mind your business, and don't be rude.'

'Fox,' she said, when it was over, and the cubs were gone to play, 'you are very clever. The other creatures are all stupid.' The Fox bowed. 'Your family were always clever,' she continued. 'I have heard about

them in the books they use in our schoolroom. It is many years since your ancestor stole the crow's dinner.'

'Don't say stole, Cat; it is not pretty. Obtained by superior ability.'

'I beg your pardon,' said the Cat; 'it is all living with those men. That is not the point. Well, but I want to know whether you are any wiser or any better than Foxes were then?'

'Really,' said the Fox, 'I am what Nature made me. I don't know. I am proud of my ancestors, and do my best to keep up the credit of the family.'

'Well, but, Fox, I mean, do you improve? do I? do any of you? The men are always talking about doing their duty, and that, they say, is the way to improve, and to be happy. And as I was not happy I thought that had, perhaps, something to do with it, so I came out to talk to the creatures. They also had the old chant—duty, duty, duty; but none of them could tell me what mine was, or whether I had any.'

The Fox smiled. 'Another leaf out of your schoolroom,' said he. 'Can't they tell you there?'

'Indeed,' she said, 'they are very absurd. They say a great deal about themselves, but they only speak disrespectfully of us. If such creatures as they can do their duty, and improve, and be happy, why can't we?'

'They say they do, do they?' said the Fox. 'What do they say of me?'

The Cat hesitated.

'Don't be afraid of hurting my feelings, Cat. Out with it.'

'They do all justice to your abilities, Fox,' said she; 'but your morality, they say, is not high. They say you are a rogue.'

'Morality!' said the Fox. 'Very moral and good they are. And you really believe all that? What do they mean by calling me a rogue?'

'They mean, you take whatever you can get, without caring whether it is just or not.'

'My dear Cat, it is very well for a man, if he can't bear his own face, to paint a pretty one on a panel and call it a looking-glass; but you don't mean that it takes *you* in?'

'Teach me,' said the Cat. 'I fear I am weak.'

'Who get justice from the men unless they can force it? Ask the sheep that are cut into mutton. Ask the horses that draw their ploughs. I don't mean it is wrong of the men to do as they do; but they needn't lie about it.'

'You surprise me,' said the Cat.

'My good Cat, there is but one law in the world. The weakest goes to the wall. The men are sharper-witted than the creatures, and so they get the better of them and use them. They may call it just, if they like: but when a tiger eats a man I guess he has just as much justice on his side as the man when he eats a sheep.'

'And that is the whole of it,' said the Cat. 'Well, it is very sad. What do you do with yourself?'

'My duty, to be sure,' said the Fox; 'use my wits and enjoy myself. My dear friend, you and I are on the lucky side. We eat and are not eaten.'

'Except by the hounds now and then,' said the Cat.

'Yes; by brutes that forget their nature, and sell their freedom to the men,' said the Fox, bitterly. 'In the mean time my wits have kept my skin whole hitherto, and I bless Nature for making me a Fox and not a goose.'

'And are you happy, Fox?'

'Happy! yes, of course. So would you be if you would do like me, and use your wits. My good Cat, I should be as miserable as you if I found my geese every day at the cave's mouth. I have to hunt for them, lie for them, sneak for them, fight for them; cheat those old fat farmers, and bring out what there is inside me; and then I am happy—of course I am. And then, Cat, think of my feelings as a father last night, when my dear boy came home with the very young gosling which was marked for the Michaelmas dinner! Old Reineke himself wasn't more than a match for that young Fox at his years. You know our epic?'

'A little of it, Fox. They don't read it in our school-room. They say it is not moral; but I have heard pieces of it. I hope it is not all quite true.'

'Pack of stuff! it is the only true book that ever was written. If it is not, it ought to be. Why, that book is the law of the world—*la carrière aux talents*—and writing it was the honestest thing ever done by a man. That fellow knew a thing or two, and wasn't ashamed of himself when he did know. They are all like him, too, if they would only say so. There never was one of them yet who wasn't more ashamed of being called

ugly than of being called a rogue, and of being called stupid than of being called naughty.'

'It has a roughish end, this life of yours, if you keep clear of the hounds, Fox,' said the Cat.

'What! a rope in the yard? Well, it must end some day; and when the farmer catches me I shall be getting old, and my brains will be taking leave of me; so the sooner I go the better, that I may disgrace myself the less. Better be jolly while it lasts, than sit mewing out your life and grumbling at it as a bore.'

'Well,' said the Cat, 'I am very much obliged to you. I suppose I may even get home again. I shall not find a wiser friend than you, and perhaps I shall not find another good-natured enough to entertain me so handsomely. But it is very sad.'

'Think of what I have said,' answered the Fox. 'I'll call at your house some night; you will take me a walk round the yard, and then I'll show you.'

'Not quite,' thought the Cat, as she trotted off. 'One good turn deserves another, that is true; and you have given me a dinner. But they have given me many at home, and I mean to take a few more of them; so I think you mustn't go round our yard.'

PART IV

THE next morning, when the Dog came down to breakfast, he found his old friend sitting in her usual place on the hearth-rug.

'Oh! so you have come back?' said he. 'How d'ye do? You don't look as if you had had a very pleasant journey.'

'I have learnt something,' said the Cat. 'Knowledge is never pleasant.'

'Then it is better to be without it,' said the Dog.

'Especially better to be without knowing how to stand on one's hind legs, Dog,' said the Cat; 'still, you see, you are proud of it; but I have learnt a great deal, Dog. They won't worship you any more, and it is better for you; you wouldn't be any happier. What did you do yesterday?'

'Indeed,' said the Dog, 'I hardly remember. I slept after you went away. In the afternoon I took a drive in the carriage. Then I had my dinner. My maid washed me and put me to bed. There is the difference between you and me; you have to wash yourself and put yourself to bed.'

'And you really don't find it a bore, living like this? Wouldn't you like something to do? Wouldn't you like some children to play with? The Fox seemed to find it very pleasant.'

'Children, indeed!' said the Dog, 'when I have got men and women. Children are well enough for foxes and wild creatures; refined dogs know better; and, for doing—can't I stand on my toes? can't I dance? at least, couldn't I before I was so fat?'

'Ah! I see everybody likes what he was bred to,' sighed the Cat. 'I was bred to do nothing, and I must like that. Train the cat as the cat should go, and the cat will be happy and ask no questions. Never seek for impossibilities, Dog. That is the secret.'

'And you have spent a day in the woods to learn that?' said he. 'I could have taught you that. Why, Cat, one day when you were sitting scratching your nose before the fire, I thought you looked so pretty that I should have liked to marry you; but I knew I couldn't, so I didn't make myself miserable.'

The Cat looked at him with her odd green eyes. 'I never wished to marry you, Dog; I shouldn't have presumed. But it was wise of you not to fret about it. Listen to me, Dog—listen. I met many creatures in the wood, all sorts of creatures, beasts and birds. They were all happy; they didn't find it a bore. They went about their work, and did it, and enjoyed it, and yet none of them had the same story to tell. Some did one thing, some another; and, except the Fox, each had got a sort of notion of doing its duty. The Fox was a rogue; he said he was; but yet he was not unhappy. His conscience never troubled him. Your work is standing on your toes, and you are happy. I have none, and this is why I am unhappy. When I

came to think about it, I found every creature out in the wood had to get its own living. I tried to get mine, but I didn't like it, because I wasn't used to it; and as for knowing, the Fox, who didn't care to know anything except how to cheat greater fools than himself, was the cleverest fellow I came across. Oh! the Owl, Dog—you should have heard the Owl. But I came to this, that it was no use trying to know, and the only way to be jolly was to go about one's own business like a decent Cat. Cats' business seems to be killing rabbits and such-like; and it is not the pleasantest possible; so the sooner one is bred to it the better. As for me, that have been bred to do nothing, why, as I said before, I must try to like that; but I consider myself an unfortunate Cat.'

'So don't I consider myself an unfortunate Dog,' said her companion.

'Very likely you do not,' said the Cat.

By this time their breakfast was come in. The Cat ate hers, the Dog did penance for his; and if one might judge by the purring on the hearth-rug, the Cat, if not the happiest of the two, at least was not exceedingly miserable.

FABLES.

I.—The Lions and the Oxen.

ONCE upon a time a number of cattle came out of the desert to settle in the broad meadows by a river. They were poor and wretched, and they found it a pleasant exchange; except for a number of lions, who lived in the mountains near, and who claimed a right, in consideration of permitting the cattle to remain, to eat as many as they wanted among them. The cattle submitted, partly because they were too weak to help it, partly because the lions said it was the will of Jupiter; and the cattle believed them. And so they went on for many ages, till at last, from better feeding, the cattle grew larger and stronger, and multiplied into great numbers; and at the same time, from other causes, the lions had much diminished; they were fewer, smaller, and meaner-looking than they had been; and, except in their own opinion of themselves, and in their appetites, which were more enormous than ever, there was nothing of the old lion left in them.

One day a large Ox was quietly grazing, when one of these lions came up, and desired the Ox to lie down, for he wanted to eat him. The Ox raised his head, and gravely protested; the Lion growled; the Ox was mild yet firm. The Lion insisted upon his legal right, and they agreed to refer the matter to Minos.

When they came into court, the Lion accused the Ox of having broken the laws of the beasts. The Lion was king, and the others were bound to obey. Prescriptive usage was clearly on the Lion's side. Minos called on the Ox for his defence.

The Ox said that, without consent of his own being asked, he had been born into the meadow. He did not consider himself much of a beast, but, such as he was, he was very happy, and gave Jupiter thanks. Now, if the Lion could show that the existence of lions was of more importance than that of oxen in the eyes of Jupiter, he had nothing more to say, he was ready to sacrifice himself. But this Lion had already eaten a thousand oxen. Lions' appetites were so insatiable that he was forced to ask whether they were really worth what was done for them,—whether the life of one lion was so noble that the lives of thousands of oxen were not equal to it? He was ready to own that lions had always eaten oxen, but lions when they first came to the meadow were a different sort of creature, and they themselves, too (and the Ox looked complacently at himself), had improved since that time. Judging by appearances, though they might be fallacious, he himself was quite as good a beast as the Lion. If the lions would lead lives

more noble than oxen could live, once more he would not complain. As it was, he submitted that the cost was too great.

Then the Lion put on a grand face and tried to roar; but when he opened his mouth he disclosed a jaw so drearily furnished that Minos laughed, and told the Ox it was his own fault if he let himself be eaten by such a beast as that. If he persisted in declining, he did not think the Lion would force him.

II.—The Farmer and the Fox.

A Farmer, whose poultry-yard had suffered severely from the foxes, succeeded at last in catching one in a trap. 'Ah, you rascal!' said he, as he saw him struggling, 'I'll teach you to steal my fat geese!—you shall hang on the tree yonder, and your brothers shall see what comes of thieving!' The Farmer was twisting a halter to do what he threatened, when the Fox, whose tongue had helped him in hard pinches before, thought there could be no harm in trying whether it might not do him one more good turn.

'You will hang me,' he said, 'to frighten my brother foxes. On the word of a fox they won't care a rabbit-skin for it; they'll come and look at me; but you may depend upon it, they will dine at your expense before they go home again!'

'Then I shall hang you for yourself, as a rogue and a rascal,' said the Farmer.

'I am only what Nature, or whatever you call the thing, chose to make me,' the Fox answered. 'I didn't make myself.'

'You stole my geese,' said the man.

'Why did Nature make me like geese, then?' said the Fox. 'Live and let live; give me my share, and I won't touch yours; but you keep them all to yourself.'

'I don't understand your fine talk,' answered the Farmer; 'but I know that you are a thief, and that you deserve to be hanged.'

His head is too thick to let me catch him so, thought the Fox; I wonder if his heart is any softer! 'You are taking away the life of a fellow-creature,' he said; 'that's a responsibility—it is a curious thing, that life, and who knows what comes after it? You say I am a rogue—I say I am not; but at any rate I ought not to be hanged—for if I am not, I don't deserve it; and if I am, you should give me time to repent!' I have him now, thought the Fox; let him get out if he can.

'Why, what would you have me do with you?' said the man.

'My notion is that you should let me go, and give me a lamb, or goose or two, every month, and then I could live without stealing: but perhaps you know better than me, and I am a rogue; my education may have been neglected; you should shut me up, and take care of me, and teach me. Who knows but in the end I may turn into a dog?'

'Very pretty,' said the Farmer; 'we have dogs enough, and more, too, than we can take care of, without you. No, no, Master Fox, I have caught you, and you shall swing, whatever is the logic of it. There will be one rogue less in the world, anyhow.'

'It is mere hate and unchristian vengeance,' said the Fox.

'No, friend,' the Farmer answered, 'I don't hate you, and I don't want to revenge myself on you; but you and I can't get on together, and I think I am of more importance than you. If nettles and thistles grow in my cabbage-garden, I don't try to persuade them to grow into cabbages; I just dig them up. I don't hate them; but I feel somehow that they mustn't hinder me with my cabbages; and that I must put them away; and so, my poor friend, I am sorry for you, but I am afraid you must swing.'

PARABLE OF THE BREAD-FRUIT TREE.

IT was after one of those heavy convulsions which have divided era from era, and left mankind to start again from the beginning, that a number of brave men gathered together to raise anew from the ground a fresh green home for themselves. The rest of the surviving race were sheltering themselves amidst the old ruins, or in the caves on the mountains, feeding on husks and shells; but these men with clear heads and brave hearts ploughed and harrowed the earth, and planted seeds, and watered them, and watched them; and the seeds grew and shot up with the spring, but one was larger and fairer than the rest, and the other plants seemed to know it, for they crawled along till they reached the large one; and they gathered round it; and clung to it and grew into it; and soon they became one great stem, with branching roots feeding it as from many fountains. Then the men got great heart in them when they saw that, and they laboured more bravely, digging about it in the hot sun, till at last it became great and

mighty, and its roots went down into the heart of the earth, and its branches stretched over all the plain.

Then many others of mankind, when they saw the tree was beautiful, came down and gathered under it, and those who had raised it received them with open arms, and they all sat under its shade together, and gathered its fruits, and made their homes there, rejoicing in its loveliness. And ages passed away, and all that generation passed away, and still the tree grew stronger and fairer, and their children's children watched it age after age, as it lived on and flowered and seeded. And they said in their hearts, the tree is immortal—it will never die. They took no care of the seed; the scent of the flowers and the taste of the sweet fruit was all they thought of: and the winds of heaven, and the wild birds, and the beasts of the field caught the stray fruits and seed-dust, and bore the seed away, and scattered it in far-off soils.

And by-and-by, at a great great age, the tree at last began to cease to grow, and then to faint and droop: its leaves were not so thick, its flowers were not so fragrant; and from time to time the night winds, which before had passed away, and had been never heard, came moaning and sighing among the branches. And the men for a while doubted and denied—they thought it was the accident of the seasons; and then a branch fell, and they said it was a storm, and such a storm as came but once in a thousand years. At last there could be no doubt that the leaves were thin and sere and scanty —that the sun shone through them—that the fruit was

tasteless. But the generation was gone away which had known the tree in its beauty, and so men said it was always so—its fruits were never better —its foliage never was thicker.

So things went on, and from time to time strangers would come among them, and would say, Why are you sitting here under the old tree? there are young trees grown of the seed of this tree, far away, more beautiful than it ever was; see, we have brought you leaves and flowers to show you. But the men would not listen. They were angry, and some they drove away, and some they killed, and poured their blood round the roots of the tree, saying, They have spoken evil of our tree; let them feed it now with their blood. At last some of their own wiser ones brought out specimens of the old fruits, which had been laid up to be preserved, and compared them with the present bearing, and they saw that the tree was not as it had been; and such of them as were good men reproached themselves, and said it was their own fault. They had not watered it; they had forgotten to manure it. So, like their first fathers, they laboured with might and main, and for a while it seemed as if they might succeed, and for a few years branches, which were almost dead, when the spring came round put out some young green shoots again. But it was only for a few years; there was not enough of living energy in the tree. Half the labour which was wasted on it would have raised another nobler one far away. So the men grew soon weary, and looked for a shorter way; and some gathered up the leaves and shoots which the strangers had brought, and grafted them on, if per-

haps they might grow; but they could not grow on a dying stock, and they, too, soon drooped and became as the rest. And others said, Come, let us tie the preserved fruits on again; perhaps they will join again to the stem, and give it back its life. But there were not enough, for only a few had been preserved; so they took painted paper and wax and clay, and cut sham leaves and fruits of the old pattern, which for a time looked bright and gay, and the world, who did not know what had been done, said—See, the tree is immortal: it is green again. Then some believed, but many saw that it was a sham, and liking better to bear the sky and sun, without any shade at all, than to live in a lie, and call painted paper leaves and flowers, they passed out in search of other homes. But the larger number stayed behind; they had lived so long in falsehood that they had forgotten there was any such thing as truth at all; the tree had done very well for them—it would do very well for their children. And if their children, as they grew up, did now and then happen to open their eyes and see how it really was, they learned from their fathers to hold their tongues about it. If the little ones and the weak ones believed, it answered all purposes, and change was inconvenient. They might smile to themselves at the folly which they countenanced, but they were discreet, and they would not expose it. This is the state of the tree, and of the men who are under it, at this present time:—they say it still does very well. Perhaps it does—but, stem and boughs and paper leaves, it is dry for the burning, and if the lightning touches it, those who sit beneath will suffer

COMPENSATION.

ONE day an Antelope was lying with her fawn at the foot of a flowering Mimosa. The weather was intensely sultry, and a Dove, who had sought shelter from the heat among the leaves, was cooing above her head.

'Happy bird!' said the Antelope. 'Happy bird! to whom the air is given for an inheritance, and whose flight is swifter than the wind. At your will you alight upon the ground, at your will you sweep into the sky, and fly races with the driving clouds; while I, poor I, am bound a prisoner to this miserable earth, and wear out my pitiable life crawling to and fro upon its surface.'

Then the Dove answered, 'It is sweet to sail along the sky, to fly from land to land, and coo among the valleys; but, Antelope, when I have sat above amidst the branches and watched your little one close its tiny lips upon your breast, and feed its life on yours, I have felt that I could strip off my wings, lay down my

plumage, and remain all my life upon the ground only once to know such blessed enjoyment.'

The breeze sighed among the boughs of the Mimosa, and a voice came trembling out of the rustling leaves: 'If the Antelope mourns her destiny, what should the Mimosa do? The Antelope is the swiftest among the animals. It rises in the morning; the ground flies under its feet—in the evening it is a hundred miles away. The Mimosa is feeding its old age on the same soil which quickened its seed cells into activity. The seasons roll by me and leave me in the old place. The winds sway among my branches, as if they longed to bear me away with them, but they pass on and leave me behind. The wild birds come and go. The flocks move by me in the evening on their way to the pleasant waters. I can never move. My cradle must be my grave.'

Then from below, at the root of the tree, came a voice which neither bird, nor Antelope, nor tree had ever heard, as a Rock Crystal from its prison in the limestone followed on the words of the Mimosa.

'Are ye all unhappy?' it said. 'If ye are, then what am I? Ye all have life. You! O Mimosa, you! whose fair flowers year by year come again to you, ever young, and fresh, and beautiful—you who can drink the rain with your leaves, who can wanton with the summer breeze, and open your breast to give a home to the wild birds, look at me and be ashamed. I only am truly wretched.'

'Alas!' said the Mimosa, 'we have life, which you

have not, it is true. We have also what you have not, its shadow—death. My beautiful children, which year by year I bring out into being, expand in their loveliness only to die. Where they are gone I too shall soon follow, while you will flash in the light of the last sun which rises upon the earth.'

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